Analysis of NIOSH FACE reports shows that more than half of workers killed by falls lacked access to Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAS)

Fatal falls and PFAS use in the construction industry: Findings from the NIOSH FACE reports

Xiuwen Sue Dong, Julie A. Largay, Sang D. Choi, Xuanwen Wang, Chris Trahan Cain, and Nancy Romano. Accident Analysis and Prevention, May 2017.

Key Findings

- Falls accounted for 42% (325) of the 768 fatalities included in the Construction FACE Database.
- One-third of the fatal falls were from heights of over 30 feet, and 26% from heights of 15 feet or less.
- PFAS were not available to more than half of the fall decedents (54%); nearly one in four fall decedents (23%) had access to PFAS, but were not using it at the time of the fall.
- Lack of access to PFAS was especially pronounced (~70%) among residential building contractors and roofing, siding, and sheet metal sector contractors.
- The findings provide strong evidence in favor of fall protection requirements by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). In addition to stronger enforcement, educating employers and workers about the importance and effectiveness of fall protection is crucial for compliance and fall prevention.