

Hispanic Construction Workers: Employment, Business Ownership, and Injury Trends

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OVERVIEW

The [U.S. Department of Labor reports](#) that there were 29.0 million (M) *Hispanic* workers in the labor force in 2020, and by 2030 this number is expected to reach 35.9M. From 2011 to 2021, [the proportion of construction workers who were Hispanic increased](#) from a quarter to almost a third of the workforce. *Hispanic-owned* businesses also accounted for about a [third of minority-owned employer firms](#) in all industries in 2020.

This Data Bulletin provides information on employment, business ownership, and fatal and nonfatal injury trends among Hispanic construction workers. Data for employment trends were estimated using the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Current Population Survey (CPS), downloaded through IPUMS. Data for construction business *owners* comes from the U.S. Census Bureau Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics Series. Data on injuries were obtained from the BLS Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) and Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII). Nonfatal injuries (SOII) were examined for those injuries resulting in *days away from work (DAFW)* and *days of job transfer or restriction (DJTR)* among private, wage-and-salary workers. Nonfatal injuries resulting in DAFW for Hispanic or Latino workers by event or exposure were provided by BLS under a special query. Nonfatal data should be interpreted as a baseline but could be higher due to known [underreporting of injuries among Hispanic workers](#). *Full-time equivalent workers (FTEs)* were obtained using the BLS CPS data to calculate rates. Fatal injury *rates* were calculated per 100,000 FTEs, while nonfatal rates were calculated per 10,000 FTEs. Both use the *composite weight* which results in minor differences in previously published rates which used a different weight.



THIS ISSUE

This issue examines trends for Hispanic construction workers, including employment, business ownership, and fatal and nonfatal injuries.

KEY FINDINGS

From 2000 to 2023, the percentage of the construction workforce that was Hispanic doubled from 16.5% to 34.0%.

Chart 1

The three construction occupations with the highest percent of Hispanic workers were drywall installers (75.2%), roofers (63.9%), and painters (62.5%).

Chart 5

In 2021, 23.8% of all firms in the U.S. construction industry were Hispanic-owned.

Chart 6

From 2011 to 2022, the number of fatal injuries among Hispanic construction workers increased 107.1%, whereas non-Hispanic construction fatalities increased 16.5%.

Chart 10

From 2021-2022, 34.5% of nonfatal DAFW injuries and 47.3% of nonfatal DJTR injuries were among Hispanic construction workers.

Chart 12

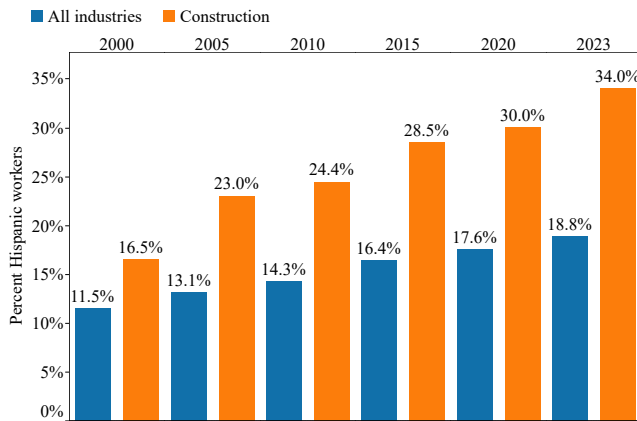
NEXT DATA BULLETIN

Aging and Retirement Trends in the Construction Industry

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From 2000 to 2023, Hispanic workers across all U.S. industries increased from 11.5% to 18.8% (Chart 1). During the same period, the percentage of construction workers who were Hispanic doubled from 16.5% to 34.0%. From 2020 to 2023, Hispanics increased from 30.0% to 34.0% of the construction workforce, a 13.3% increase. The [growing proportion of Hispanic construction workers](#) was also documented by the BLS.

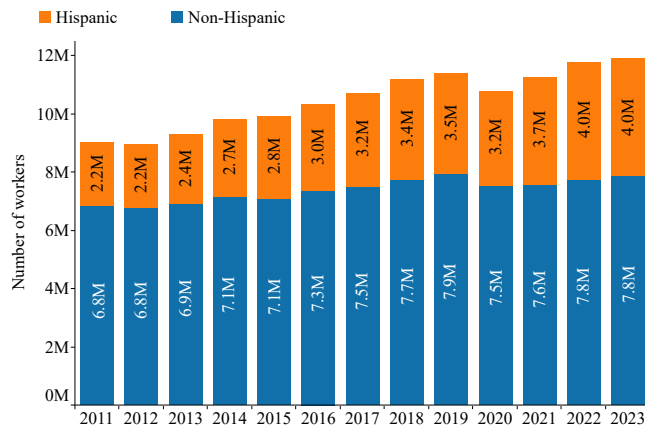
1. Percent Hispanic workers by industry (selected years 2000-2023)



Source: 2000-2023 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

It was not only the proportion but also the number of Hispanic workers that grew from 2011 to 2023 (Chart 2). In construction, the number of Hispanic workers rose by approximately 1.8 million (M; 2.2M to 4.0M) from 2011 to 2023, while non-Hispanic workers increased 1.0M (6.8M to 7.8M).

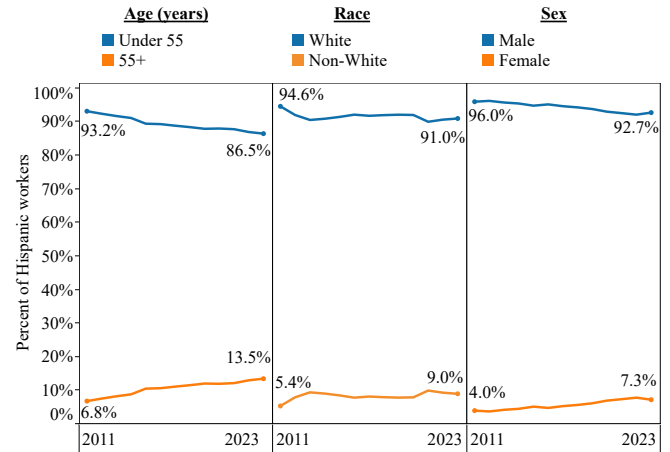
2. Number of construction workers by ethnicity (2011-2023)



Source: 2011-2023 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

Selected demographics and characteristics of Hispanic construction workers were examined next (Charts 3 and 4). From 2011 to 2023, the proportion of *aging* (55 years or older) Hispanic workers rose 98.5% (6.8% to 13.5%). During the same period, the proportion of Hispanic workers who were *non-white* grew 66.7% (5.4% to 9.0%). The share of Hispanic workers who were women grew 82.5%, from 4.0% to 7.3%.

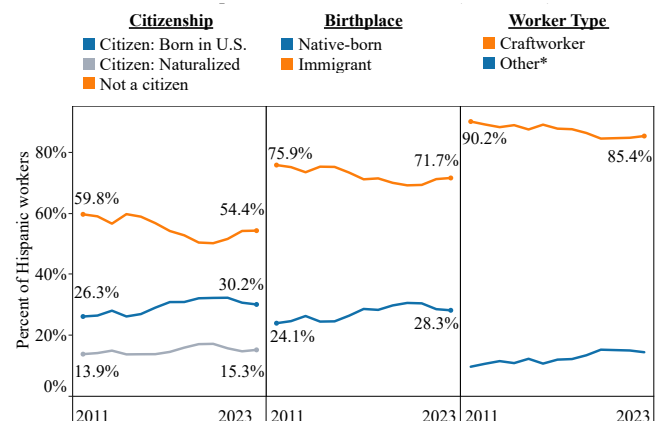
3. Demographics of Hispanic construction workers (2011-2023)



Source: 2011-2023 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

The percentage of Hispanic construction workers who were citizens born in the U.S. or abroad to U.S. parents increased 14.8% from 26.3% in 2011 to 30.2% in 2023 (Chart 4). During that period, the percentage of Hispanic construction workers who were *immigrants* to the U.S. decreased 5.5% (75.9% to 71.7%). The percentage of Hispanic *craftworkers* in construction decreased 5.3%, from 90.2% to 85.4%.

4. Characteristics of Hispanic construction workers (2011-2023)

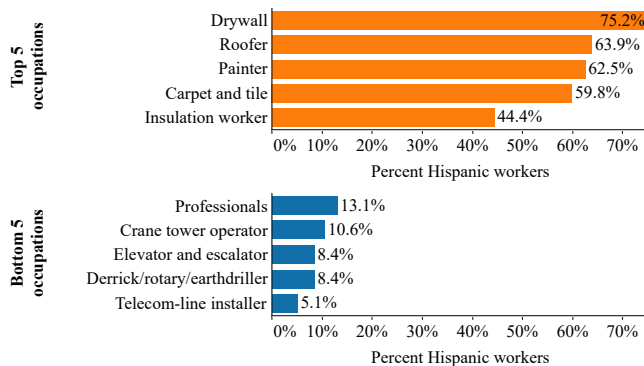


Source: 2011-2023 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

*Other workers include managerial, professional (architects, accountants, lawyers, etc.), and administrative support workers.

The percentage of Hispanic workers in select construction occupations varied widely (Chart 5). In 2023, the highest proportion of Hispanic workers was found among drywall installers (75.2%), while the lowest proportion was among telecom-line installers (5.1%).

5. Percent Hispanic workers, by top and bottom 5 occupations (2023)*^



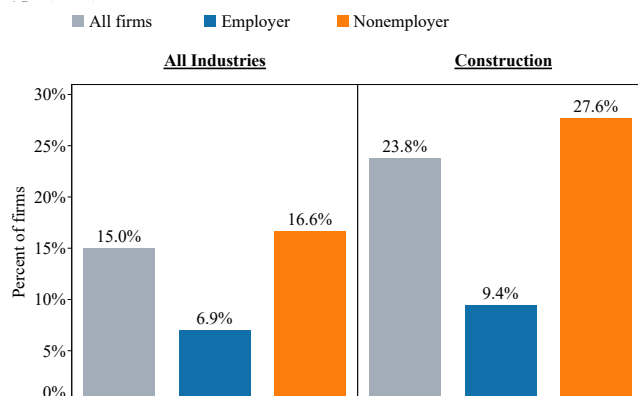
Source: 2023 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

* Select occupations examined. Excluded occupations with $N < 30$.

^ Orange bars indicate higher percentage of Hispanic workers compared to entire construction industry.

The percentage of Hispanic-owned firms were then examined by firm type (Chart 6). In 2021, the percentage of firms owned by Hispanics was 60% higher in construction (23.8%) than in all industries (15.0%). By firm type, 9.4% of construction employer firms were Hispanic-owned, while more than a quarter (27.6%) of construction *nonemployer* firms were Hispanic-owned.

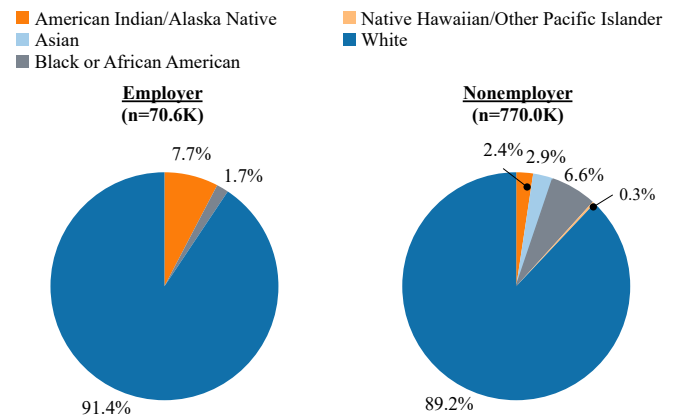
6. Hispanic-owned construction firms, by firm type and industry (2021)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics series (NES-D).

The racial and sex composition of Hispanic-owned construction firms was then examined by firm type (Charts 7 and 8). Employer firms had a slightly lower percentage of non-white owners than nonemployer firms (9.4% versus 12.2%). Hispanic-owned employer firms were less likely to have a male owner than nonemployer firms, 74.8% versus 85.5%, respectively; while Hispanic-owned employer firms had a higher percentage of being *equally owned* by female and male owners than nonemployer firms, 10.9% versus 0.5%, respectively.

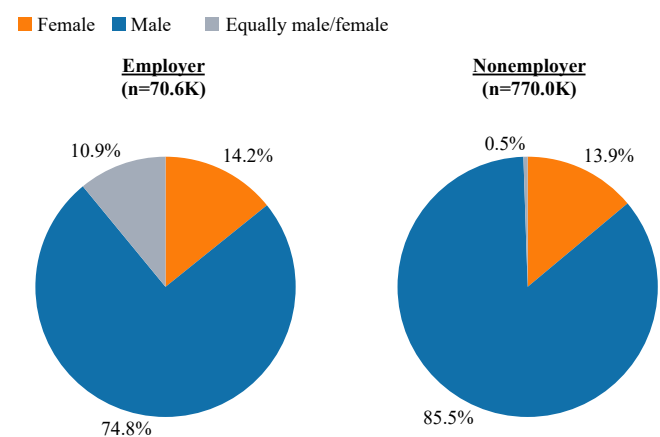
7. Hispanic-owned construction firms, by firm type and race (2021)*



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics series (NES-D).

* Firms can have more than one owner and be assigned more than one category. May not sum to 100%.

8. Hispanic-owned construction firms, by firm type and sex (2021)*

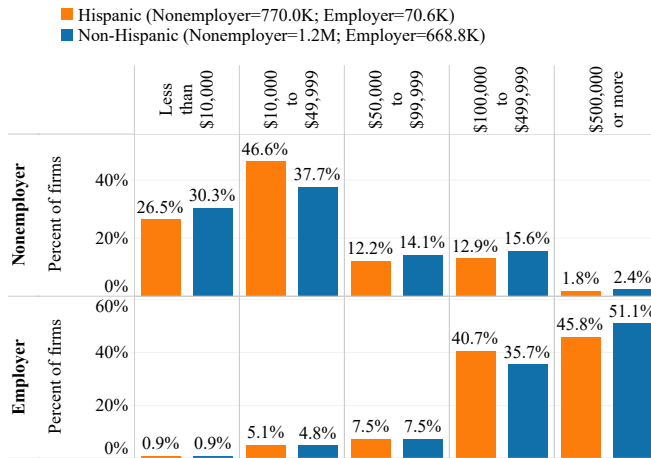


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics series (NES-D).

* May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Next, *receipt sizes* of construction firms were examined by firm type and ethnicity (Chart 9). Hispanic and non-Hispanic employer firms had similar distributions of receipt sizes: 86.5% of Hispanic and 86.8% of non-Hispanic owned firms had \$100,000 or more in revenue. By comparison, a majority of nonemployer firms had \$99,999 or less in revenue (85.3% of Hispanic and 82.1% of Non-Hispanic owned firms).

9. Revenue size of construction firms, by firm type and ethnicity (2021)*

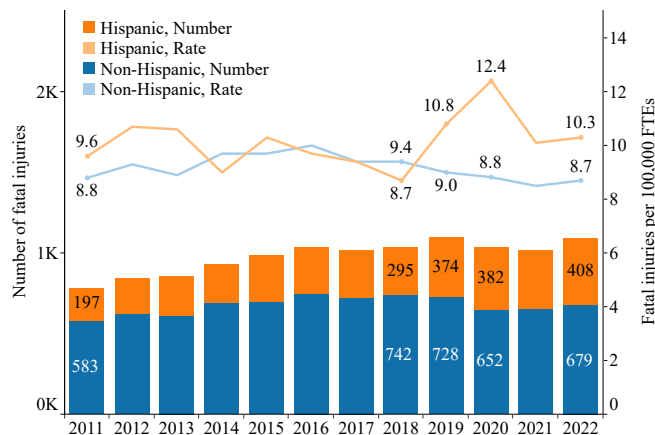


Source: Nonemployer Statistics by Demographics series (NES-D).

* May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

From 2011 to 2022, the number of fatal injuries among Hispanic construction workers increased 107.1% (197 to 408), whereas fatal injuries among non-Hispanic construction workers rose just 16.5% (583 to 679; Chart 10). During this period, the fatal injury rate increased 7.3% for Hispanic workers (9.6 to 10.3 per 100,000 FTEs) but decreased 1.1% for non-Hispanic workers (8.8 to 8.7 per 100,000 FTEs). By 2022, Hispanic construction workers accounted for 37.5% of all fatal work injuries, compared to 25.3% in 2011.

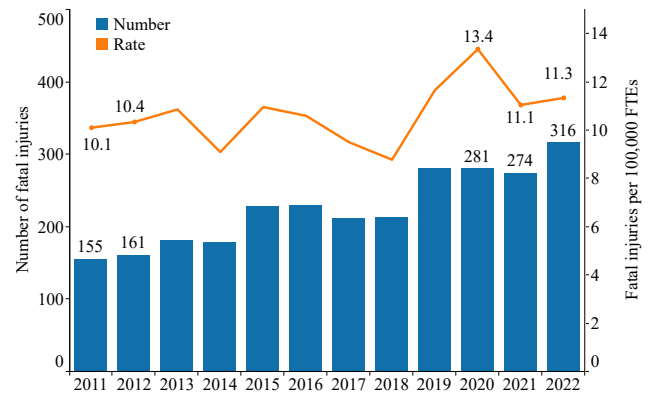
10. Number and rate of fatal injuries, by ethnicity (2011-2022)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011-2022 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and 2011-2022 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

Fatal injuries among immigrant Hispanic workers increased 103.9% (155 to 316) from 2011 to 2022 and their fatality rate increased 11.9% (10.1 to 11.3 per 100,000 FTEs; Chart 11). In 2022, immigrants accounted for 77.5% of all Hispanic fatal injuries.

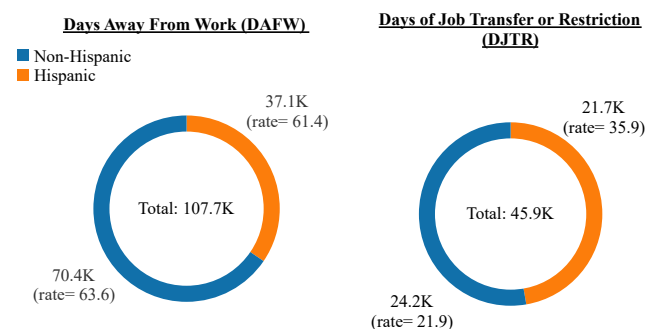
11. Fatal injuries among immigrant Hispanic construction workers (2011-2022)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011-2022 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and 2011-2022 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

Hispanic construction workers suffered 34.5% of DAFW injuries and 47.3% of DJTR injuries (Chart 12). By comparison, for [all industries](#) 13.1% of DAFW injuries and 15.7% of DJTR injuries were among Hispanic workers (data not shown). The nonfatal DAFW injury rates were similar for Hispanic and non-Hispanic workers, 61.4 per 10,000 FTEs versus 63.6 per 10,000 FTEs, respectively. However, the rate for nonfatal DJTR injuries was 1.6 times higher among Hispanic workers than non-Hispanics, 35.9 versus 21.9 per 10,000 FTEs. The top three event/exposures for nonfatal DAFW injuries among Hispanic workers were contact with objects or equipment (35.2%); falls, slips, trips (32.5%), and overexertion and bodily reaction (20.7%; data not shown).

12. Number and rate* of nonfatal injuries, by injury type and ethnicity (2021-2022)



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021-2022 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses and 2021-2022 IPUMS Current Population Survey.

* Rate calculated per 10,000 FTEs.

Hispanic workers continue to be a growing demographic group in the U.S. construction industry, now accounting for over a third of all construction workers. From 2011 to 2023, Hispanic groups in construction with high growth rates included aging (+98.5%) and women (+82.5%) workers.

Hispanic construction workers are at [increased risk of injuries](#), which is likely due to a combination of causes, including language barriers, cultural factors, immigration-related concerns, and the fact that they are more likely to work for small employers (e.g., fewer than 20 employees). There is often a lack of training material available in Spanish and fewer safety programs available in small construction businesses.

By continually monitoring data among Hispanics in construction, we can better assess how the industry is changing and what resources are required to address potential safety concerns.

To address the evolving needs of this workforce, [CPWR](#), [NIOSH](#), and [OSHA](#) publish both English and Spanish materials to address both longstanding and emerging safety and health concerns in construction. For an overview of translated CPWR resources, visit our “[Lista de recursos en español](#).” We also have translations of many of the topic-based resources scattered throughout our site alongside the English versions, and we have recently started engaging in simultaneous interpretation from English to Spanish on our [monthly webinar series](#).

ACCESS THE CHARTS & MORE

View the [charts](#) in PowerPoint and the [data](#) underlying the charts in Excel. Downloading will start when you click on each link. These files can also be found under the Data Bulletin at: <https://www.cpwr.com/research/data-center/data-reports/>.

DEFINITIONS

- **Aging workers** – workers aged 55 years or older.
- **Birthplace** – indicates if the worker was born within or outside of the U.S.
 - **Immigrants** – those who were born outside of the U.S.
 - **Native-born** – those born in the U.S. or those born abroad to U.S. parents.
- **Craftworkers** – all workers, except managerial, professional (architects, accountants, lawyers, etc.), and administrative support workers. Also called blue-collar or production workers.
- **Composite weight** – a statistical weight used to produce representative statistics that replicate BLS labor force estimates.
- **Days away from work (DAFW)** – nonfatal injury cases resulting in at least one day away from work beyond the day of injury or illness onset. A full definition can be found in the [Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Handbook of Methods](#).
- **Days of job transfer or restriction (DJTR)** – nonfatal injury cases resulting in a worker being transferred to a different job temporarily or restricted on work activity. A full definition can be found in the [Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Handbook of Methods](#).
- **Employer firms** – have paid employees. Payroll includes all forms of compensation, including salaries, wages, commissions, dismissal pay, etc.
- **Equally owned** – firms in which ownership is equally split (50/50) for the demographic.
- **Ethnicity** – Separate from race, ethnicity is defined based on a respondent’s self-reported Hispanic origin.
 - **Hispanic** – Refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, including people who reported detailed Hispanic or Latino groups, regardless of race.
- **Full-time equivalent workers (FTEs)** – determined by the hours worked per employee on a full-time basis, defined as working 2,000 hours (40 hours x 50 weeks) per year.
- **Hispanic-owned** – at least one of the owners reported being Hispanic.
- **Nonemployer firms** – no paid employees, annual business receipt of \$1 or more (specific to construction), and are subject to federal income taxes. Independent contractors are an example of nonpayroll establishments.
- **Owner** – person who has more than 50% of the stock or equity of the business.
- **Race** – an individual’s self-identification in groups that classify racial, national origin, or sociocultural groups. People may identify as more than one race. Definitions for individual groups are defined by the U.S. Census (see: www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html).
 - **Non-White** – CPWR calculated field combining American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and more than one race.
- **Rates** – calculated by dividing the count of injuries by the number of full-time equivalents for the period then multiplying by 100,000 for fatal and 10,000 for nonfatal injuries. When multiple years are reported the injuries and populations were summed up first.
- **Receipt Size** – the dollar value of reported receipts which includes gross receipts, sales, commissions, and income. A full definition can be found in the [Nonemployer Statistics Glossary](#).

DATA SOURCES

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The CPWR Data Center is part of CPWR—The Center for Construction Research and Training. CPWR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and training institution created by NABTU, and serves as its research arm. CPWR has focused on construction safety and health research since 1990. The Data Bulletin, a series of publications analyzing construction-related data, is part of our ongoing surveillance project funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Besides cpwr.com, visit CPWR's other online resources to help reduce construction safety and health hazards:

- Choose Hand Safety
<https://choosehandsafety.org/>
- Construction Solutions
<https://www.cpwrconstructionsolutions.org/>
- COVID-19 Construction Clearinghouse
<https://covid.elcosh.org/index.php>
- Electronic Library of Construction Occupational Safety and Health
<https://www.elcosh.org/index.php>
- eLCOSH Nano
<https://nano.elcosh.org/>
- Exposure Control Database
<https://ecd.cpwrconstructionsolutions.org/>
- Nano Safety Data Sheet Improvement Tool
<https://nanosds.elcosh.org/>
- Safety Climate - Safety Management Information System (SC-SMIS)
www.scsmis.com
- Stop Construction Falls
<https://stopconstructionfalls.com/>
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