Preparing the Next Generation of Construction Workers for Safe Work

Integrating Occupational Safety and Health Training into Career Technical Education (CTE) in Construction

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Overview

The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates a 30% increase in construction employment from 2010 to 2020. Studies confirm that new and young workers entering the industry face a higher risk of workplace injury. An important avenue to strengthen their knowledge of occupational safety and health (OSH) practices is to incorporate it within Career Technical Education (CTE) at the high school, community and technical college levels. The purpose of this study was to develop a preliminary understanding of the extent of OSH integration into CTE construction training. In a review of the scientific literature, as well as CTE and other construction skills websites and resources, investigators found almost no research on the extent or quality of OSH training in CTE programs. Additional insights were obtained through 22 interviews with 27 individuals (instructors, administrators and leaders of CTE programs and organizations).

Key Findings

- CTE instructors in construction programs are keenly aware of the need for OSH training. The primary drivers are liability concerns/injury prevention within the CTE program, followed by industry demand and meeting educational system standards.
- Although states' and organizations' CTE program training varies widely in curriculum and training delivered, we found OSHA 10-hour training, which covers U.S. construction health and safety regulations, is fast becoming the norm.
- CTE instructors and other key informants identified a need for additional high quality training/instructional tools to teach safety and health, seeking a model of "participatory classroom training" to build students' problem-solving and communications skills. Instructors also needed more time and mechanisms to learn about advances made in safety and health/regulatory changes and to connect with other educators on teaching activities.

Recommendations:

- Create a system for instructors to share best practices and resources. Conduct further research with instructors to determine the types of resources most needed, then make the tools and materials available.
- Develop, evaluate and disseminate a "model OSHA 10-plus" training curriculum with evidence-based best practices for delivering training and include leadership and communications skills for new/young workers.
- Strengthen educational and industry standards so that all federally funded construction skills training involves quality OSH training and "critical thinking/problem-solving" for students.

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See full report:
http://bit.ly/1f6E0Jm

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