

Testing a Fall Prevention Training Program

Outcomes of a revised apprentice carpenter fall prevention training curriculum

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Overview

Falls from heights are a leading cause of occupational deaths and injuries among construction workers, especially inexperienced workers and workers employed in residential construction. This research reports changes in fall prevention behaviors following revision of fall prevention training in a union-based carpenters' apprenticeship program. The research team used a comprehensive needs assessment to identify gaps in apprentice carpenters' preparation to work at heights, used these results to guide a school-based fall prevention curriculum to fill these gaps, and measured the effects of the revised curriculum on knowledge, beliefs, and fall prevention behaviors.

Key Findings

- Prior to curriculum revisions, 16% of the apprentice carpenters reported having fallen from height in the preceding year. Many unsafe behaviors were observed during worksite audits, and fall protection devices were rarely used.
- The revised training targeted problem areas and used adult learning principles to actively engage participants. Apprentices observed fall protection devices and practiced fall protection behaviors on a partially constructed house in the apprenticeship training center.
- Measurable improvements in crew behavior, safety climate and fall prevention knowledge were noted after the curriculum revision. The rate of all falls from height and ladder falls decreased following the revised training.
- Future work is needed to improve training and mentoring of early-stage workers, who are at a significantly higher risk of injury than more experienced carpenters.

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Read the abstract:

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