

Fall Fatalities in Residential Construction

Fatal falls in the U.S. residential construction industry

Xiuwen Sue Dong, Xuanwen Wang, Julie A. Largay, James W. Platner, Erich Stafford, Chris Trahan Cain, and Sang D. Choi. American Journal of Industrial Medicine, May 2014 (published online ahead of print).

Overview

Falls from height remain the most common cause of workplace fatalities among residential construction workers in the United States. Using data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and Current Employment Statistics, CPWR researchers examined patterns and trends of fall fatalities in the U.S. residential construction between 2003 and 2010. The findings suggest that fall safety within the residential construction industry lags behind commercial construction and construction in industrial settings.

Key Findings

- Between 2003 and 2010, 1,917 workers died in the U.S. residential construction industry, of which nearly half (45.3%) of the fatalities were from falls.
- In the residential roofing industry, 80.2% of fatalities were from falls.
- Workers in residential construction who were 55 years and older, foreign-born Hispanics, or employed in establishments with 10 or fewer employees suffered a higher proportion of fatal falls compared to their nonresidential counterparts.
- Falls from ladders accounted for 23.0% of fatal falls in residential construction compared to 12.7% in nonresidential construction.
- Approximately one-third of fatal falls in residential construction occurred among self-employed workers – nearly three times the proportion found in nonresidential construction.

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See abstract:

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