

Fall Prevention in Commercial Construction by Trade and Construction Activity

Evaluating fall safety compliance among skilled trades in construction

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Overview

Falls are a leading cause of workplace death, lost work time, and costs to the construction industry. This study exploited a unique research opportunity – the construction of a new campus building to house the George Washington University Milken School of Public Health – to perform multiple repeat assessments of fall prevention compliance on one general contractor’s site during the bulk of construction activity. Researchers developed the “GW Audit of Fall Risk” to evaluate fall prevention practices during twelve months of construction activity. They collected 644 observations during the period of study to evaluate compliance by construction trade, equipment type and stage of construction.

Key Findings

- The site superintendent fostered a strong safety culture on the site, which was reflected by high compliance scores overall – over 90%. Site superintendent training should emphasize the importance of cultivating a safety culture on each project to make personal safety an inherent part of the job for each worker.
- Of the five equipment types examined, the lowest mean safety compliance scores were associated with personal fall arrest systems.
- Of the five trades examined, the lowest mean safety compliance scores were recorded by ironworkers; carpenters earned the second lowest scores.
- Lowest overall safety compliance was found during the concrete pouring/ placement phase during the first and second months of observation.

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<https://bit.ly/2VidXQF>

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