

RISKS

IN THE CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY

THE STEPS TO SAFETY

In the construction industry, 46 percent of injuries are caused by slips, trips or falls.

MEMIC
Partners for Workplace Safety

Call 1•888•887•8867

This publication will reveal some facts about your industry which will help you understand and reduce the costs of workplace injuries. We hope that this information will help you to **assess your workplace and to make it as safe and productive as it can be.** But if you need help, call us.

MEMIC data analysis indicates the following are areas of concern in the construction industry. The following list of problems with recommended solutions that — if put into practice — can help make your place of business safer.

1. Inexperience:

The accident rate in construction is highest for workers who have less than one year of service. When an accident occurs and the injury is severe enough to cause lost time, the worker is generally out of work less than a month. The 20- to 34-year-old age group yields nearly half of the industry's injuries. These problems can best be controlled through three programs:

- **Employee Selection Process** which includes job application, reference checks, in-depth interviews and placement physicals.
- **Employee Orientation Programs** which are conducted by the immediate supervisor, introducing the employee to company policies and the scope of a project, as well as tools-and-process training.
- **Medical Management Program** which identifies a specific medical facility / doctor which is agreeable to working with you in returning employees back to work or alternative duty work as soon as they are able. The longer the employee is away from work, the more it costs the company.

2. Lack of Effective Supervision:

Well-trained supervisors will manage well-planned jobs and will ultimately produce safe and productive job sites. Research shows that many supervisors are promoted into a supervisory position because of their technical ability or productivity. This does not mean that he or she is ready for the human relations challenges of making people accountable for safety and productivity.

- **Supervisor Training.** Train your supervisors in human relations skills, behavior-based management and their responsibility toward safe production. We can help through our supervisory management training programs.
- **Make accountability to work safely a part of the job.** Just as productivity is valued, so should safe work environments. Make safety a part of every supervisor's job performance appraisal.

3. Slips, Trips and Falls

Of the injuries that occur in the construction industry, 46 percent are caused by slips, trips or falls. Here are some simple ways to prevent these injuries:

- **Routine housekeeping practices** are generally not followed on construction sites. By effectively managing these housekeeping hazards, exposures to injury will be significantly reduced.
- **Maintaining proper worksite access** through careful and routine maintenance of equipment such as ladders, scaffolds, walkways, and the use of proper tools and equipment is important in significantly reducing injuries.
- **Fall protection is critical.** A strictly enforced fall protection policy should be in place. Anyone who is in a position of falling 6 feet or more should always use fall protection equipment.

4. Inadequate Protective Equipment:

Construction laborers account for 26 percent of all industry injuries, followed closely by carpenters. In 90 percent of these cases, personal protective equipment was either not in use, was improperly used, or the employee was not trained in controlling the exposure.

- **Protective Equipment.** Simple protective equipment is available on the market today. It is unreasonable to see people working without basic protection including: eye wear, hardhats, hard-toe boots and any other equipment which makes it easier for the worker to get the job done effectively and safely.

5. Material Handling

Many workers are injured during the loading and unloading process. Items are sometimes too heavy or too bulky for safe lifting. Too often customer loading/unloading sites are not safe, or proper machinery is not available. Drivers, for instance, sometimes feel an obligation to complete a job and will load or unload without proper assistance. To avoid potential injuries, employers should require workers to:

- **Use and maintain lift-aid equipment** such as cranes, hand carts, dollies, and stationary rollers (rather than lifting by hand) whenever possible.
- **When materials must be moved by hand, use appropriate body positioning.** Avoid lifting from the floor level. Avoid extended reaching away from the body or overhead when moving materials.
- **Ask for help** when lifting heavy or bulky objects.

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The Fact File

Top Construction Industry Injury Sources

1. Floors, walkways, including ground surfaces, stairs
2. Another person
3. Building materials
4. Structural elements (doors, fences, roofs)
5. Fasteners, ropes
6. Non-powered hand tools
7. Non-pressurized containers
8. Powered hand tools
9. Scrap, waste, debris
10. Motorized vehicle

Body-part injured

Head	10%
Chest	40%
Shoulder-hand	18%
Back	3%
Lower body	19%
Multiple	10%

Top 5 Occupations with injuries

1. Laborers
2. Carpenters
3. Truck drivers
4. Pipeworkers
5. Masonry



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