Construction-related Deaths Oklahoma, 1998-2008

June 2010

Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program

Construction and renovation of homes and buildings results in many injuries and deaths each year in the United States. From 1998 to 2008, 82 people were killed in construction-related incidents in Oklahoma. Construction-related deaths accounted for 7% of all work-related deaths in Oklahoma during this time. More than half of all construction-related deaths were fall-related. All fatal injuries involved male workers; ages ranged from 13 to 80. Fatal injuries were most common in June and August and least common in January and December. More than half of all fatal injuries occurred between 10:00 AM and 4:00 PM.

- A 33-year-old male and co-workers were building a large exhaust stack at a power plant and welding inside the stack while standing on scaffolding over a large boiler. The scaffolding sections were 15 feet apart with ladders for movement to different levels. The worker started climbing down and fell 30-40 feet.
- A 45-year-old male was on a roof receiving bundles of shingles off a conveyor belt. While stacking the bundles, he lost his balance, slid to the end of the roof, and fell 10-15 feet to the ground. A bundle of asphalt shingles (about 80 pounds) fell on his chest and abdomen.
- A 40-year-old male unrestrained backhoe operator was driving along an embankment when the backhoe turned over on its left side. He was ejected and pinned under the canopy.
- A 41-year-old male roofer was climbing a ladder being held by a co-worker onto the roof of a church when a gust of wind caused his ladder to shift. His co-worker lost his balance and let go of the ladder. The roofer and ladder fell into high-voltage electrical lines and he was electrocuted.
- A 50-year-old male and his co-workers were installing a skylight. A piece of plywood covering the opening for the skylight had been removed and he fell 30-40 feet through the opening, landing on a concrete floor.

The Oklahoma Occupational Safety and Health Surveillance Program collects statewide information on 19 occupational health conditions in order to develop and inform occupational injury and illness prevention programs. Oklahoma's occupational surveillance system is a research program of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

For detailed reports, please go to the Occupational Injuries section at:

http://ips.health.ok.gov

Contact Information:

Oklahoma State Department of Health

Injury Prevention Service

1000 NE 10th Street

Oklahoma City, OK 73117

405-271-3430 or 1-800-522-0204

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Be alert to potential hazards. Do not distract fellow workers.
- Wear proper safety equipment, such as hard hats, safety goggles, gloves, and protective footwear.
- Use fall protection equipment such as lanyards and harnesses when working from heights. Cover holes on elevated levels.
- Scaffolding should be assembled on solid ground and away from electrical lines. Scaffolding should be equipped with guardrails.
- Use caution when walking around a construction site or on unfinished levels of construction. Watch for unfinished floors and uncovered holes.
- Maintain and utilize equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- Keep workers on foot separated from equipment as much as possible.
- Do not enter trenches that have not been properly shored. Equipment and materials should be stored away from the edge of an excavated trench to prevent collapse of trench walls.
- Be aware of and avoid power lines near the work site.
- Avoid using metal ladders near electrical work or power lines.
- Use ladders tall enough for the task assigned. Do not overload ladders.