

## TOOLBOX TALK #33

### FATAL FALLS IN CONSTRUCTION

Fall-related construction worker fatalities increased by 36% from 2011 to 2015, outpacing an increase in construction employment and total industry fatalities, according to a report from the Center for Construction Research and Training, also known as CPWR.

Employment in the construction industry climbed to 10.3 million workers in 2016, a 16% increase from 2012, the report states. Meanwhile, the construction industry experienced a 26% increase in overall fatalities from 2011 to 2015. A total of 367 construction workers suffered fatal falls in 2015.



Data presented in the report comes from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other findings:

- 55% of fatal falls occurred from heights of 20 feet or less
- 33% of fatal falls involved falls from roofs. 24% involved ladders, and scaffolds and staging accounted for 15%
- Fatal falls in residential construction rose to 61 in 2015 from 26 in 2011
- Roofers continue to experience the highest rate of fatal falls to a lower level, 31.5 per 100,000 full-time workers, although this represents a decrease from 39.9 in 2014
- Workers at an increased risk of fatal falls include Hispanic workers, foreign-born workers, and workers 55 and older

“These are real people behind the numbers, they show up every day expecting to come home,” Gavin West, research analyst for CPWR, said.

The report was released during the 2017 National Safety Stand Down in Construction. Falls are the leading cause of death among construction workers, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), accounting for 37% of the deaths in the industry.

“The findings in this report emphasize the need to reduce falls and the importance of the ongoing national fall prevention campaign,” CPWR states. “It is estimated that the Safety Stand Down events have reached more than 5 million workers across the nation in a 3-year period (2014 – 2016), vitally raising public awareness of the risk of falls and the importance of fall protection in the construction industry.