

Leading Causes of Fatal and Nonfatal Injuries in Construction

In 2010, fall injuries were responsible for 267 construction worker deaths, accounting for about one-third of all fatal work injuries in construction. Transportation incidents (209 deaths) and contact with objects (141 deaths) were the second and third leading causes of construction fatalities, respectively (chart 43a).¹

Leading causes of fatal and nonfatal injuries are different. For example, bodily reaction/exertion, which does not normally cause death, was the leading cause of nonfatal work injuries resulting in days away from work (DAFW), and accounted for more than one-third (25,150) of DAFW cases in construction in 2010 (chart 43b). While falls were the leading cause of death in construction, they ranked as the third leading cause of nonfatal injuries in 2010, accounting for one in four DAFW injuries. Transportation incidents led to more than 26% of construction fatalities, but accounted for less than 4% of all nonfatal injuries in the construction industry. Furthermore, contact with objects caused one-third of all nonfatal injuries, but 18% of fatalities in construction.

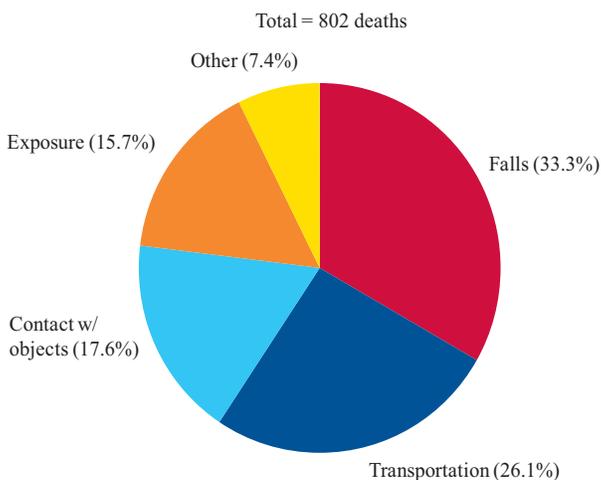
In more detailed categories, from 1992 through 2010, the highest ranking causes of fatalities in construction were falls to a lower level (6,678 deaths, accounting for about 97% of fatal falls in construction), highway incidents (2,707 deaths), contact

with electric current (2,443 deaths), and being struck by an object (2,054 deaths; chart 43c). Between 1992 and 2010, these four causes claimed an average of 730 lives per year in construction.

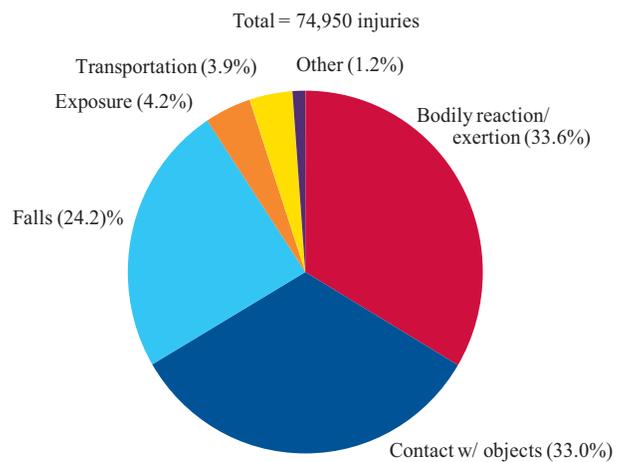
All four leading causes of death decreased by 2010, but their trends differed over time. While the number of fatalities from falls to a lower level remained similar in 1992 and in 2010, fatalities due to contact with electric current decreased nearly 45% between the two time points, indicating effective interventions on electrocutions in construction. Despite declines during the recession, the total number of deaths due to highway incidents exceeded total deaths from contact with electric current and being struck by objects since 1999, climbing to the second leading cause of fatalities in construction. The statistics suggest that prevention efforts for fall injuries and highway incidents should be enhanced.

Being struck by an object remained the leading cause of nonfatal injuries in construction in 2010 (chart 43d). Yet, the rate dropped from 43.3 to 23.8 per 10,000 *full-time equivalent workers* (FTEs, see Glossary) from 2006 to 2010, following overall injury trends (see page 38). At the same time, falls to a lower level have become the second highest cause of nonfatal injuries in construction, despite the decline over time.

43a. Distribution of leading causes of fatalities in construction, 2010 (All employment)

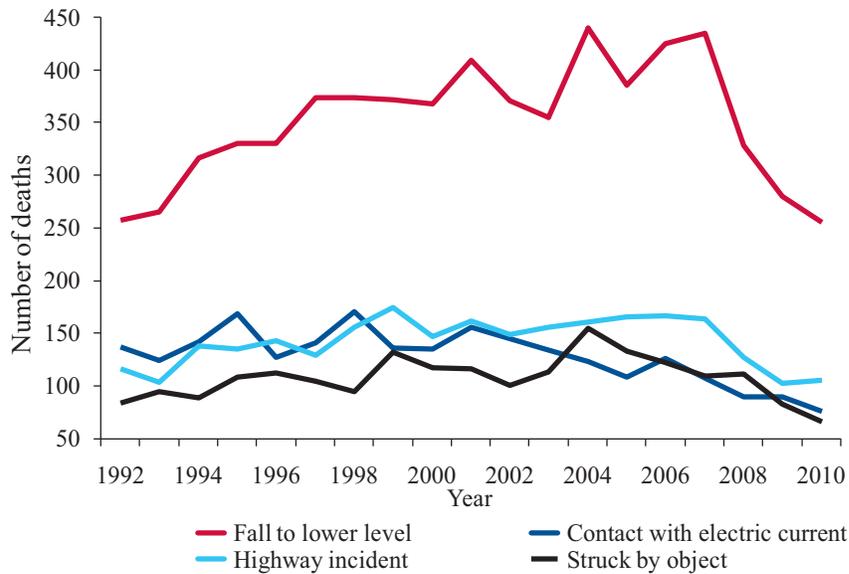


43b. Distribution of leading causes of nonfatal injuries resulting in days away from work in construction, 2010 (Private wage-and-salary workers)

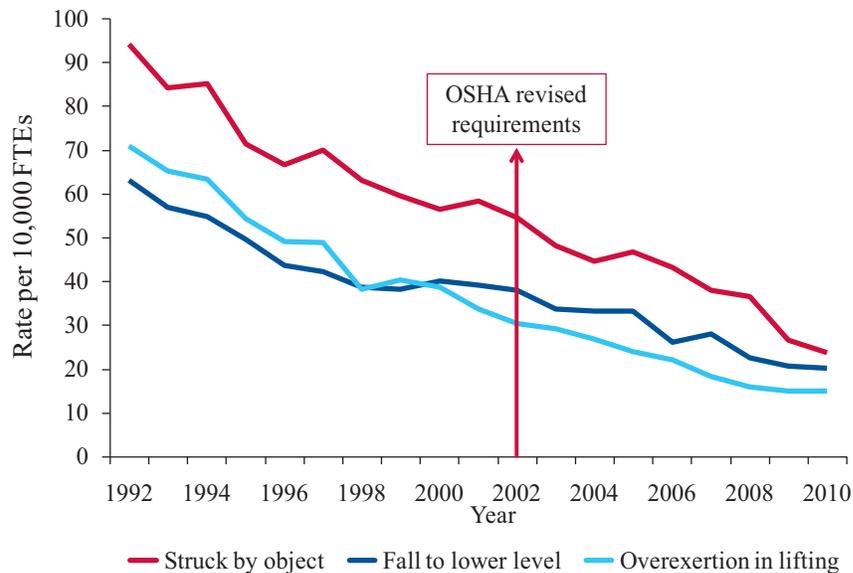


1. Information on the data sources used for the tabulations is reported on page 38.

43c. Leading causes of fatalities in construction, 1992-2010
(All employment)



43d. Rate of leading causes of nonfatal injuries resulting in days away from work in construction, 1992-2010
(Private wage-and-salary workers)



Note: Chart 43a – Total may not add to 100% due to rounding. “Transportation” refers to injuries involving vehicles – due to collision or other type of traffic accident, loss of control, or a sudden stop, start, or jolting of a vehicle regardless of the location where the event occurred. “Contact with objects” includes being struck by an object, struck against an object, caught in or compressed by equipment or objects, and caught in or crushed by collapsing materials. “Exposure” includes exposure to electric current; temperature extremes; air pressure changes; caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances; and harmful substances and environments. “Other” includes fires and explosions; assaults and violent acts, including self-inflicted injuries, assaults, and assaults by animals; and bodily reactions/exertion, such as when startled; and other non-classifiable events or exposures. Chart 43b – Total may not add to 100% due to rounding. “Other” includes fires and explosions; assaults and violent acts; and other non-classifiable events or exposures. Lost-workday cases include only those involving days away from work and not cases with only restricted work activity. Illnesses account for about 3% of the total.

Source: Chart 43a – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm> (Accessed November 2012). Chart 43b – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2010 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. <http://www.bls.gov/data/#injuries> (Accessed December 2011). Chart 43c – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1992-2010 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries. <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm> (Accessed November 2012). Chart 43d – U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 1992-2010 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. (Table R75). <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcdnew.htm> (Accessed December 2011).