



SPECIAL REPORT

# The Changing Face of Construction Fatalities

The U.S. workforce is aging and the construction industry is no exception. With baby boomers continuing to work, older workers are more plentiful on construction sites. At the same time, Hispanics are working construction in greater numbers than ever before. In 2005, about one of four construction workers was of Hispanic origin.

These changes are reflected in somber statistics: worker deaths from job-related injuries. Workers, aged 45 to 54, are fatally injured on construction job sites more frequently than workers aged 25 to 34. In 2005, 44 percent of deaths occurred among construction workers age 45 and older, compared with 34 percent in 1992. The shift may come from an increase of older workers on the job. Construction workers over the age of 45 were approximately 34 percent of all those employed in 2005, while just 10 years earlier, that same age group numbered only 28 percent.

Like older workers, more Hispanics have died on the job. Fatal injuries of Hispanic construction workers tripled from 108 in 1992 to 320 in 2005. But what is more disturbing is the death rate. Hispanic workers were killed on the job at a rate that was nearly twice that of all others in the construction industry in 2000. This trend could result from the jobs Hispanic workers take on. Hispanics are more likely than others to work in high-risk construction occupations, such as roofing and working as laborers.

These and other statistics come from the U.S. *Construction Chart Book*, a document now being prepared for publication at the end of 2007. The *Chart Book* is a product of The Center to Protect Workers' Rights (CPWR), the research and training arm of the Building Construction Trades Department (BCTD). This publication is produced once every five years, as it takes its data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Census Bureau, and other federal, state, and private sources that track employment, demographic, and injury/fatality trends in the workforce.

CPWR staff is sharing some of the findings with union Roofers and Waterproofers prior to publishing the fourth edition of the *Chart Book*. (The third edition was published in 2002.)

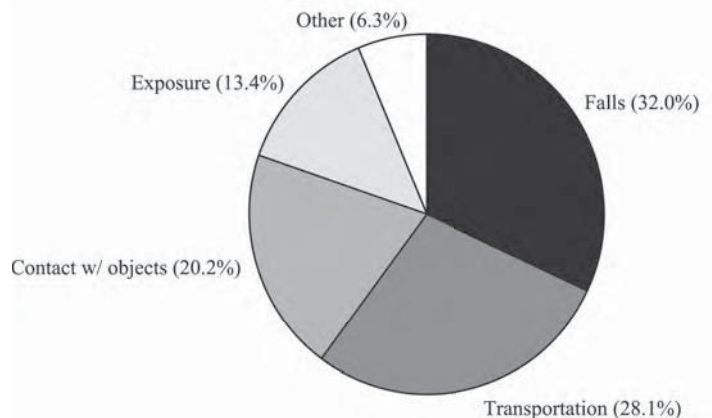
So what is taking the lives of construction workers on job sites? Unfortunately, the leading cause of death in the construction industry stubbornly remains the same: falls. Falls accounted for about one-third of work-related fatalities in 2005. The most likely cause of a fatal fall was fall from a roof (33 percent), with fall from scaffold/staging at 18 percent, and fall from a ladder at 16 percent. The second and third leading causes of worker death on construction sites were transportation incidents and contact with objects. Transportation incidents refer to injuries involving

vehicles – including the capsizing of a crane that is being moved (and not necessarily on the work site). Contact with objects includes being struck by an object, struck against an object or caught in or compressed by equipment or objects, and caught in or crushed by collapsing materials.

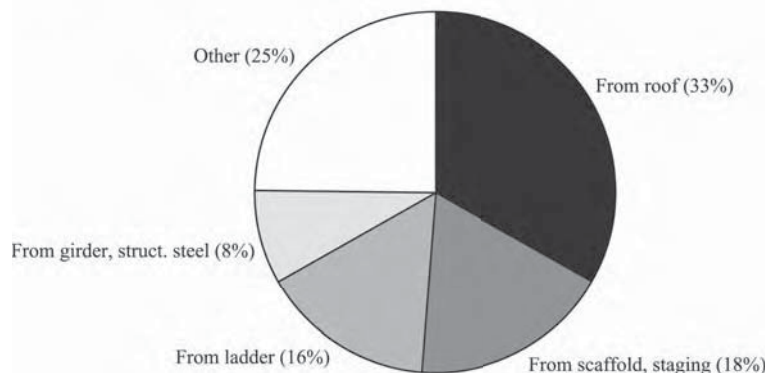
Not every construction mishap results in a death. The No. 1 cause of nonfatal injuries on job sites is contact with objects. Falls, overexertion, and transportation incidents also ranked among the leading causes of nonfatal worker injuries.

If you would like to review more information like this or would like a copy of the *Chart Book*, check CPWR's Web site for an announcement of the book's publication later this year: [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com). You can also find a PDF copy of the previous edition of the *Chart Book* on the site.

36a. Distribution of leading causes of deaths from injuries, construction, 2005



37a. Distribution of causes of deaths from falls in construction, 1992-2005 average



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