

Construction Worker Safety Issues

By Elizabeth Smith on 08/31/2011

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 816 construction workers lost their lives in 2009 due to injuries suffered on the job. That means that during that year, close to 20% of all work-related deaths in the United States were attributable to this one industry. Clearly, the number of serious health and safety challenges present in and around construction sites is rather daunting.

Some of the worst dangers include the presence of asbestos, potential lead contamination, excessive carbon monoxide in the air (due to the number of gasoline powered engines in the area) and the possibility of accidentally falling from unstable scaffolding and other high places.

Given the seriousness of all of these threats, the following list of additional construction site dangers has been created to remind construction workers *and their employers* of the many safety precautions that must be ***routinely honored*** if all workers at such sites are to be properly protected.

Additional Dangers Present at Many Construction Sites

- Trenching and Excavation Cave-ins;
- Hazardous accidents caused by defective or malfunctioning machinery;
- Electrical injuries that can cause electrocutions, burns, electric shocks and falls;
- Asphalt fumes and emissions;
- Neurological damage caused by welding fumes;
- Sandblasting or abrasive blasting dusts and particles;
- Prolonged exposure to excessive heat or cold;

- Presence of mold and dampness in buildings;
- Inadequate safety equipment to properly protect workers' hearing and vision, and
- Exposing workers' skin to numerous toxins.

Although the fairly high pay offered to some construction workers may seem enticing, especially at a time when all jobs are hard to come by, the health and safety risks borne by construction workers *should give pause to many jobhunters*. Fortunately, the U. S. Department of Labor's **Occupational Safety & Health Administration**(OSHA) continues to work hard behind the scenes, trying to make sure proper safety standards are enforced in every workplace, including construction sites.

Properly Reporting Workplace Dangers

If you know of any serious safety problems present in your workplace, please take careful note of the following information. OSHA has tried to create a safe way for you to report your concerns to the government so that proper inspections can be made. If necessary, corrective changes will be ordered. Furthermore, OSHA complaints provide filers with *the right to protect their identity* so that employers won't try to retaliate against them. In other words, OSHA will keep your complaint information completely confidential while investigating it.

Workers wanting to learn more about filing OSHA complaints can visit the following link to determine how they should move forward:<http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/worker/complain.html>. *(This information is available online in both Spanish and English.)*

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