



Safety Connection

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SAFETY RESEARCH

- Effects of Rising Temperatures on Construction Workers. Turner Construction completed a [pilot study](#) to better understand the effects of heat on the health of construction workers. A key finding is that many workers' core body temperatures reached risky levels even on moderate summer days. The data showed that "43% of workers experienced a peak core temperature exceeding 100.4°F, with 4% exceeding 101.3°F, even in conditions that [were] cooler than typical summer conditions". Researchers acknowledged that "in periods of extreme hot weather, such as during heat waves, construction workers are at substantial risk of heat-related health issues." Another finding is that most workers arrive dehydrated at the jobsite and there is an opportunity for employers to do direct outreach to employees about hydrating outside of work.
- Occupational Injuries Among Construction Workers by Age and Related Economic Loss. A [new NIOSH study](#) focused on estimating age differences in the rate, severity, and cost of work injuries. Ohio workers' comp claims data for construction workers was used to estimate claim rates and costs by age group. The study found that regardless of the cause of injury, severity and costs tended to be *highest* for those aged 45 years and older, which suggests that as workers age, injuries might be more severe and require a longer recovery period. The study concluded that the variation in rates of injury types by age suggests that age-specific prevention strategies may be useful. [CPWR has resources](#) to support aging construction workers.
- NIOSH NORA Construction Sector Council. This group brings together individuals and organizations, *including JSI*, with a shared interest in improving the safety and health of construction workers. NORA Construction Sector Council also identifies [research priorities and objectives](#) in the National Research Agenda for Construction. The [NIOSH Construction Program](#) facilitates the work of this Council and coordinates NIOSH research in the construction industry sector.

CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TRENDS

- Construction had the most fatalities of any industry in 2022. New [data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS) showed that more construction workers died on the job last year than in any other industry sector. In 2022, 1,056 construction workers died on the jobsite, an 11% increase—compared to other occupation groups. Falls, slips, or trips were the leading cause of 423 of these fatalities in construction with transportation incidents coming in second with 243. Unintentional overdoses and suicides both increased 13% in all workplaces. The overall fatal injury rate for Hispanic or Latino workers increased from 2021 to 2022, with transportation incidents and falls, slips, and trips the highest cause of fatalities. In construction, foreign-born Hispanic or Latino workers accounted for 29.9% (316) of total construction worker fatalities (1,056).
- Immigrant Share in Construction Highest on Record. The latest US Census American Community Survey data shows the [share of immigrants in construction reached a new historic high](#) of 24.7%, with the construction trades even higher, exceeding 31%. Of the 12 million workers in construction in 2022, 2.9 million were foreign-born. Historically, the number of newly arrived immigrants in construction rises rapidly when housing starts are rising and declines precipitously when the housing industry is contracting. Native-born workers remain reluctant and continue joining the construction industry at a slower rate.
- OSHA switches from hard hats to safety helmets. In December, OSHA [announced](#) that the agency is replacing traditional hard hats used by its employees with more modern safety helmets to protect them better when they are on inspection sites. OSHA notes that in 2020, the BLS reported head injuries account for 6 percent of non-fatal occupational injuries involving days away from work. OSHA also recommends safety helmets be used by people working in the construction industry.