



Safety Pays, Falls Cost

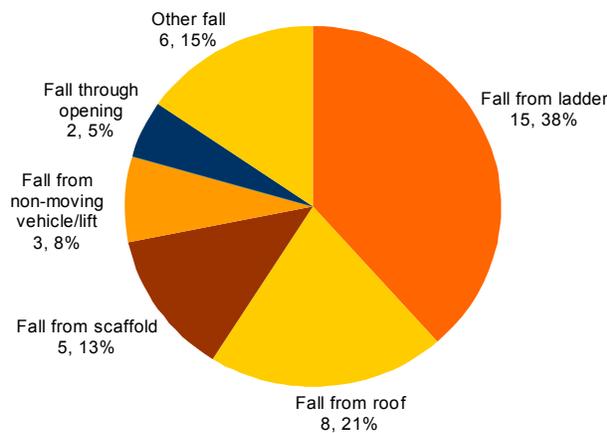
Falls in construction can be prevented.



Fatal falls among Massachusetts construction workers, 2009-2013

Construction workers create the structures that shape our lives. They build our homes and schools, repair our roads and bridges, create office parks, supermarkets, hospitals, sports arenas... And they are at high risk of being killed on the job. In Massachusetts over the last five years, 71 construction workers were fatally injured at work – more workers than in any other industry. Over half of these workers (39 of 71) fell to their deaths. The rate of fatal falls among construction workers was nine times the average rate for all workers in the state (4.5 versus 0.5 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers).

Fatal falls among construction workers
Massachusetts, 2009-2013 (N=39)



Source: MA FACE and CFOI

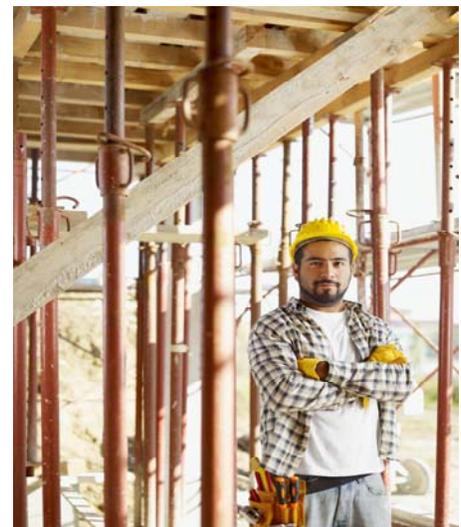
More than three-quarters of these fatal falls (32 of 39) involved workers in small contracting firms that employed 10 or fewer people, and two-thirds were working in residential construction (26 of 39). Roofers had the highest number of fatal falls (9) followed by carpenters and painters (6 each), laborers and construction contractors (4 each).

Contrary to common belief, over half (56%) of construction workers who fell to their deaths fell from heights of 25 feet or less. Eleven workers died as a result of falls from heights of 15 feet or lower. Fatal falls from ladders were the most common, followed by falls from roofs and scaffolds.

Nationwide, Hispanic construction workers are at high risk of falling to their deaths and the same appears to be true in Massachusetts. During 2009-2013, six of the 39 construction workers who fell to their deaths (15%) were Hispanic, whereas Hispanic workers made up about 7% of the construction workforce.

Fatal falls in construction are just the tip of the iceberg. In 2012, the most recent year for which we have data, there were an estimated 350 injuries resulting in days away from work among Massachusetts construction workers due to falls to a lower level – and not all injuries are reported and included in these official estimates. Nationwide, half of construction workers injured in such falls lost 25 or more days of work. (Source: MA Department of Labor Standards; U.S. DOL– Bureau of Labor Statistics)

See next page.





Preventing falls in construction.



It is not surprising that construction workers are at high risk of falls given the nature of their work. But these falls should not be simply accepted as part of the job. We know how to prevent falls in construction:

- Plan** ahead to get the job done safely.
- Provide** the right equipment.
- Train** everyone to use the equipment safely.

Contractors and construction workers and their unions, as well as builders, equipment designers, homeowners – even architects who design our buildings – have critical roles to play in reducing falls in construction. A nationwide campaign to reduce falls in construction is underway. Log on to the campaign website and also the NIOSH and OSHA websites to learn what can be done to make sure that the workers building our homes get to go home.

www.stopconstructionfalls.com

www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction/stopfalls.html www.osha.gov/stopfalls

Some fall prevention resources in Massachusetts:

Brochures in English, Spanish or Portuguese from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH):

- Ladder safety for residential contractors
- Scaffold safety for residential contractors
- Falls in construction: Myths and facts
- Personal fall arrest systems for residential construction
- Ladder Safety for Painters: Prep Before You Step (English)
- Homeowner Brochure: Having work done on your roof? Ask your contractor to play it safe. (English)

Accessible online: www.mass.gov/dph/FACE

Hard copies can be ordered from MDPH: (800) 338-5223; MA.FACE@state.ma.us

Safety Training Grants from the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents. Grants available for providing workplace health and safety training to employees and employers. Any company covered by the Massachusetts Workers' Compensation Insurance Law is eligible to apply for these grants. www.mass.gov/dia/safety

Safety and Health On-site Consultation Program
The Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards offers free consultation services to help small employers improve their safety and health programs, identify hazards and train employees. (617) 626-6504; www.mass.gov/lwd/labor-standards

OSHA Regional Office
JFK Federal Building—Room E340
Boston, MA 02203
(617) 565-9860; www.osha.gov

Fatal falls among construction workers by height of fall
Massachusetts, 2009-2013 (n=37)

