

Job Safety and Risk Factors In Construction

Insights

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Managing construction safety risks requires more than recognizing the most frequently cited OSHA standards or focusing on reducing the experience modification rate (EMR) and injury and illness rates.

As a starting point, risk professionals should divide their efforts into two separate (and not always related) categories:

- risk as a direct safety issue; and
- risk as a monetary issue.

Frustratingly, efforts to comply with OSHA standards may not meaningfully affect workplace injuries, and a focus on reducing injuries may still leave the company exposed to OSHA citations for routine compliance items. One also could add a third category, documentation, because employers may be following OSHA requirements, but they cannot document their actions.

Safety experts Bob Emmerich and Howard Mavity of Fisher Phillips say the most pressing direct safety issues are:

- walking surfaces and falls from all surfaces, including ladders;
- scaffolds;
- bobcats/steer loaders, lifts and “independent” dump truck drivers;

- steel erection;
- excavation;
- struck-by construction equipment, especially in site work (not just in highway work zones);
- electrocution, especially involving overhead power lines; and
- inappropriate use of lifting equipment, including cranes and forklifts.

Beyond serious OSHA citations, financial issues include:

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