

OKFACE NEWS

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Construction Safety



Each year, an average of 18 construction site fatalities occur in Oklahoma. Below are descriptions of residential and commercial construction workers who were killed while on the job.

- A worker, who was part of a crew installing skylights and roof decking, fell through an opening, while installing sealing tape. The plywood cover had been moved and the unsecured skylight pan slipped out under the weight of the worker. He died from head injuries received from landing on the concrete floor 33 feet below.
- A worker was tearing down a garage when the roof and one wall collapsed, knocking him to his side and covering him with debris. It took 10-15 minutes to free the worker, who later died from the injuries he received.
- A welder, working from a hydraulic lift bucket, was constructing a large billboard sign. For unknown reasons, the stabilizer bar on the truck gave way and tilted the bucket. The worker, who was not wearing fall protection at the time, fell 22 feet to his death.

The Oklahoma Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (OKFACE) staff collect information on all work-related deaths and recommend prevention strategies. FACE is a research program of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Division of Safety Research.

For detailed reports, please go to:
<http://www.health.state.ok.us/program/injury/okface/index.html>

- A worker remodeling a home bathroom went into the attic to work on the wiring for an exhaust fan/light that was being replaced. He was found with both hands still on the wires; the electricity had not been turned off to that area of the residence.

From the foundation to the roof, there are numerous processes occurring at all times on construction sites. These processes involve a lot of detail, tight timelines, and teamwork to get the job done. All of these fatal incidents occurred because the wrong conditions and variables came together at the same time. Safety planning is an important part of any task. It is critical to recognize, evaluate, and control hazards in order to create a safe work environment. So, take the extra time for proper precautions and ensure your safety and the safety of your co-workers.

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SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Ensure that work area hazards are identified and controlled to prevent slips, trips, and falls.*
- *Provide adequate guarding and fall protection around skylights and roof and floor openings.*
- *While demolition is occurring, ensure that all workers are aware of overhead hazards and are clear of any debris that may fall.*
- *Ensure that personal protective equipment is worn, such as fall protection, hard hats, safety goggles, and work gloves.*
- *When working with electricity or other types of hazardous energy, make sure that circuits are shut off and de-energized.*