

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH BRANCH

Occupational Health Watch: April 2019

Workers Memorial Day: A Time to Reflect & Protect

A solar company owner was working alone on a roof of a warehouse when he fell 40 feet through an unguarded skylight to the concrete floor below. The victim was not wearing personal fall protection.

On Workers Memorial Day, we remember California workers who have died and strive to prevent future fatalities. Workers continue to face life-or-death risks on the job, including:

Methylene chloride: The U.S. EPA recently banned consumer sales of paint strippers containing methylene chloride, a solvent that can cause serious illness or death when used in enclosed spaces. Commercial sales to contractors and other professionals are still permitted, leaving workers at risk.

Silica dust exposure: Workers involved in manufacturing, finishing, and installing natural and manufactured stone countertops are exposed to breathable crystalline silica. Breathing silica dust can lead to serious and often fatal illnesses.

Tree trimming and landscaping: These jobs continue to be dangerous for workers because of inadequate training, equipment, and lack of hazard awareness.

Falls: Fall hazards are present in many jobs, but the construction industry has the highest frequency of fall-related fatalities. Falls account for one of every three deaths in construction. OHB encourages employers and workers to join the National Safety Stand-Down May 6-10 to prevent falls.

For Workers Memorial Day, organizations will be holding events to honor workers and press for workplace safety and health.



Photo: Using safety equipment properly can reduce the chance of injuries and fatalities on the job.

Resources

Preventing Worker Deaths from Paint Strippers Containing Methylene Chloride – OHB topic page

Silica Safety Resources for Stone Fabricators – OHB topic page

Landscaping & Tree Trimming Safety Resources – OHB topic page

Preventing Worker Injuries & Deaths from Falls – OHB topic page

Workers Memorial Day Events in California - OHB website

Email Occupational Health Watch (OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback or change of address.

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