

NYCOSH 'Deadly Skyline' Report Details Increase in Construction Worker Fatalities for 2021

New York's construction industry ranks dangerously high for workers among all industries, according to report

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, April 3, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Construction consistently ranks as one of the most dangerous industries across the nation. Individuals within

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this profession, including roofers, heavy machinery operators, and general construction workers, are exposed to unique risks that can be life-threatening. Slip and falls, getting struck by objects, electrocution, and accidents involving heavy machinery are just some of the risks construction workers face when they are on the job site.

In its efforts to track fatalities associated with the construction industry throughout New York, the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) takes stock of current fatality trends. In this year's 'Deadly

Skyline' report, the NYCOSH took a closer look at what is going on in the industry and reported on recommendations to help increase safety and awareness for workers and businesses. This year's report was compiled using the most recent data available from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics for the year 2021. The 2023 Deadly Skyline Report can be viewed or downloaded by following [this link](#).

Since first being published in 2014, this annual report was created after the Workplace Fatalities Registry bill, sponsored by Senator Jessica Ramos in the Senate (S8828) and Assemblywoman Carmen De La Rosa (A5965A) was put into effect. The implementation of this bill required employers of construction workers who were injured or killed on the job site to report to the New York State Department of Labor.

Findings of the 'Deadly Skyline' Report

When considering this information, it's important to keep in mind that findings reflect a period in which New York State construction sites were closed due to nationwide COVID-19 pandemic

lockdown policies. Still, this does not take away from the reality that the construction industry remains a high fatality-rate industry. Recently compiled data reflect the following:

□ New York state's construction industry remained dangerously high for workers. In 2021, fatalities among workers in the industry peaked significantly. There were 61 construction site-related fatalities in 2021 as compared to 41 deaths in 2020, a 49% Increase.

□ Fatality rates were significantly higher throughout New York City. New York City construction fatalities jumped 54%. Twenty construction workers died in 2021 as compared to 13 who died in 2020.

□ Additionally, rates of fatalities climbed both in New York City and New York state as well. New York state saw an increase of 11.1 per 100,000 fatalities in 2020 as compared to 12.1 per 100,000 in 2021, a 9% increase. In New York City, these statistics were significantly higher. There were seven deaths per 100,000 in 2020 as compared to 11.2 per 100,000 in 2021, a staggering 60% increase.

□ Workers who were not part of a union remained at higher risk for death while on the worksite. According to NYCOSH, in an analysis of the 39 OSHA construction fatalities in 2021, 82% of the workers who died on a private work site were not part of a union. In New York City, of the 15 OSHA investigated sites, 80% of the construction workers who died were also non-union.

□ There was also a disparity in the ethnicity of workers who died while on the job site. The report highlights that Latinx workers were more likely to die while on a construction site in 2021. It is estimated that 10% of New York state workers identify as Latinx. However, 25.5% of worker fatalities were Latinx workers, a 42% jump from 18% in 2020.

OSHA Involvement And Response in 2021

Along with recording worker fatalities, the report also examines OSHA's involvement in responding when fatalities do occur. The report detailed the following:

□ OSHA's fines for deaths in the construction industry continue to increase. In 2020, the average fine was \$44,779. In 2021, the average fine went up to \$67,681.

□ OSHA inspections have also dropped as compared to pre-pandemic levels. In 2020, OSHA conducted 2,080 inspections as compared to 2,568 inspections in 2021. However, recent data is a 42% decrease from data compiled in 2019.



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□ OSHA has also published fewer press releases In 2021. This is a trend that has slowly been on the decline over the past five years. In 2016, OSHA released 58 press releases, compared to just 13 in 2022. However, in 2019, they issued 21 press releases.

□ The report found that OSHA violations also coincided with fatalities on the construction work site. In an analysis done by NYCOSH, in 96% of instances where construction workers died, there were coinciding OSHA violations.

In addition to collecting and analyzing data, the report includes recommendations to help promote worker safety. These recommendations included the following:

- Fund adequate safety education and training
- Extend and defend protective legislation
- Expand regulations
- Increase monitoring and enforcement
- Increase funding
- Implement greater protections for Latinx workers who are more susceptible to fatalities while on the job

Leandros A. Vrionedes, a [New York City injury attorney](#) who frequently represents NYC construction accident victims and their families, expressed concern with many of the findings in the report. “We all know construction is a dangerous industry, but it could be made much safer if property developers and contractors simply followed the law,” said Vrionedes, pointing to the extremely high correlation between OSHA violations and workplace fatalities. “OSHA regulations exist to make construction worksites safer, but they are no good if contractors fail to heed them.” Vrionedes says he appreciates the fact that OSHA has stepped up the amount of fines it imposes for workplace safety violations, but he expresses disappointment that the number of inspections has dropped.

“Property owners, developers and contractors need to know that their construction sites will be inspected, especially if there is a concern or complaint about safety, and that OSHA will levy fines that are significant enough to make owners, developers and contractors take notice,” says Vrionedes.

Hopefully, the combination of OSHA fines with the compensation attorneys like Vrionedes obtain for their clients will not only provide some amount of justice to accident victims and their families but also spur those in charge of construction projects in NYC to ensure their projects proceed with adequate safety measures employed.

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