



CONN-OSHA Quarterly

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT of LABOR DIVISION of OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY and HEALTH

Fall Protection: *Everybody is at Risk*

By: John Able, CSP



Whether we like it or not, we are all getting older and our bodies are changing. As we age, our overall body condition deteriorates with the loss of muscle condition, muscle mass, bone mass, flexibility, and reaction time. These changes affect the way we work and, over time, make us vulnerable to an injurious fall. The U.S. Department of Labor reports

that falls are one of the leading causes of traumatic occupational injury and death. In the past five years, nearly 4,000 American workers have lost their lives to work-related falls. Forty two of those deaths occurred in Connecticut.

Many of OSHA's top ten most cited violations for fiscal year 2009 (October 1, 2008 – September 30, 2009) were related to fall prevention. Scaffolding violations took first place, followed by fall protection violations. Seventh place went to ladder violations. Each of these citations reflects employees working in conditions that not only increased the chance of a fall but also increased the likelihood and severity of an injury.

Every employer and employee needs the ability to recognize fall hazards in their workplace. They must work together to control and eliminate that hazard. Employers are required to maintain all walking/working surfaces in good condition. Stools, ladders, scaffolds, stairs, safety belts, lifelines, lanyards, safety nets, aerial lifts, guardrail systems, personal fall arrest systems, positioning device systems and vehicle-mounted elevating and rotating work platforms are to be used:

- Appropriately by persons aware of the hazards,
- By people who take the time to assess the risks,
- By people who think about staying in control,
- By people who have assessed the consequences of their actions, and
- Only by people that have been trained by their employer in the use of that equipment.

These recommendations are critically important for employees that routinely work at height (roofers, line

technicians, arborists, etc.) because they face an immediate danger to their life and health. The employer and employee must work together to ensure the hazard is controlled to the greatest extent possible. Guardrails, nets, harnesses, etc., are possible control methods referred to in the OSHA standards. Always follow manufacturer's instructions in the proper use and maintenance of equipment.

None of us want to experience an injury from a fall. Recognizing, respecting, and controlling fall hazards are key in preventing falls. It is also important to acknowledge changes in physical abilities and adjust work habits accordingly. Focusing on safety will help us get through each day injury-free. And that's the goal, an injury-free workplace and, while we're at it, an injury-free home.

Total number of falls	3,430	100%
Type of fall		
To lower level	1,110	32%
On same level	2,300	67%
Occupational Group		
Service	1,010	29%
Professional & related	540	16%
Transportation & material moving	440	13%
Sales and related	370	11%
Office & administrative support	290	8%
Number of Days Away		
Median	14	--
1-2 days	570	17%
3-10 days	970	28%
11-20 days	330	10%
21-30 days	400	12%
31+ Days	1,150	34%

CONN-OSHA Official Wins National Award



The members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) award the Safety Award for Excellence (SAFE) to individuals displaying unique and outstanding efforts in advancing safety in the home building industry.

and workers in the residential construction industry return home to their families and friends each day. I would not have received this award without HBA Safety Committee's work to benefit its members."

"Ensuring a safe worksite is of paramount importance to home builders across the nation, and CONN-OSHA's commitment sets a shining example for the housing industry," said Colin Campbell, chair of the NAHB Construction Safety & Health Committee and a builder from Charleston, South Carolina.

John Able and CONN-OSHA was recognized during the NAHB Safety Award for Excellence Reception at the Hilton Inn, Las Vegas on January 20, 2010. Nine other categories of winners from across the country were also honored at the ceremony.

In the photo from left to right are: Mike Girard, HBA Safety Committee Chairman, John Able, CONN-OSHA and Chris Nelson, President of HBA of Hartford County.

For more information about the SAFE awards, and to read about honorees in previous years, go to: www.nahb.org/SAFE.

In 2009, the category of Federal/State Plan OSHA Official of the Year was awarded to John Able, a Certified Safety Professional for the Connecticut Department of Labor, Division of Occupational Safety & Health (CONN-OSHA).

The SAFE award honors the achievements of builders and trade contractors who have developed and implemented high-quality construction safety programs, as well as government officials and NAHB-affiliated associations who have made successful efforts to improve safety.

"CONN-OSHA works closely with the Home Builders Association of Hartford County (HBA)" said John Able, "to promote safety so home builders, trade contractors,

Falls on the Same Level



Each day, 9 workers are injured in workplace falls (annual total of 3,430). While we often assume injurious falls occur from heights, such as ladders or roofs, 67% are falls to the same level.

Many of these injuries could be avoided with simple precautions. Indoors, ensure that walkways are clear of boxes, carts, etc., floors are kept dry and clean, and carpets do not curl or wrinkle. Parking lots, sidewalks, and outside areas should be well maintained: remove snow and ice promptly, provide adequate lighting, patch potholes and cracks, and fix any loose stones, bricks, or patio pavers. For employees that are frequently walking outside, proper footgear with good traction is necessary. Consider providing "stabilizers" – a studded overshoe that helps prevent slipping on snow and ice.

Of course, one of the best methods in preventing injuries is to have safety-aware employees. Recognize and respect hazards, move at a steady pace instead of rushing, and wear appropriate shoes. In Connecticut, employees are doing a good job but there is still room for improvement. Thousands of workers fall on the job each year and miss multiple days of work. This disrupts home life, work life, and the financial stability of both the employer and the employee.



Most Common OSHA Citations for Fiscal Year 2009

Richard Fairfax, director of OSHA's directorate of enforcement programs, announced the most common OSHA citations for fiscal year 2009. According to Fairfax, 81 percent of the violations OSHA recorded throughout the year were either serious or willful. The number of Top 10 violations has increased almost 30 percent from the previous year.

"These standards here in the top 10 are fairly consistent from year to year," Fairfax said. Citations involving ladders, however, have only recently entered the Top 10. "Three to four years ago, ladders weren't on the Top 10," he added. "Anecdotal data shows people are using ladders when they shouldn't."

Once again, hazard communication landed within the top three positions on the list. OSHA recognizes the need to start another outreach campaign and offer more education in this area especially if it aligns its hazcom standard with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

1. Scaffolding -- 9,093 violations. Included are scaffold accidents (most often resulting from planking or support giving way), an employee slipping, and employees struck by a falling object.
2. Fall protection -- 6,771 violations. Any time a worker is at a height of 4 feet or more, he or she is at risk and needs to be protected. Fall protection must be provided at 4 feet in general industry, 5 feet in maritime work environments, and 6 feet in construction.
3. Hazard communication -- 6,378 violations. Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to evaluate the hazards of the chemicals they produce or import. They must prepare labels and safety data sheets to convey the hazards to their customers.
4. Respiratory protection -- 3,803 violations. Respirators protect workers against insufficient oxygen environments, harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, gases, vapors and sprays. These hazards may cause cancer, lung impairment, other diseases or death.
5. Lockout/Tagout -- 3,321 violations. Lockout/Tagout refers to practices and procedures that safeguard employees from the unexpected startup of machinery and equipment or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance.
6. Electrical (wiring) -- 3,079 violations. Regulations in this category protect engineers, electricians and other professionals working directly with electricity, including overhead lines, cable harnesses and circuit assemblies.
7. Ladders -- 3,072 violations. The proper use and maintenance of ladders, including maximum load, spacing of rungs, ladder placement, etc., are addressed in these regulations. Ladders with structural defects must be immediately withdrawn from service until repaired.
8. Powered industrial trucks -- 2,993 violations. Many employees are injured when lift trucks drive off loading docks, fall between docks and an unsecured trailer, strike an employee, or are misused as lifts.
9. Electrical -- 2,556 violations. Regulations in this category protect individuals that work with electricity indirectly, such as office employees and salespeople.
10. Machine guarding -- 2,364 violations. Moving machine parts have the potential to cause severe workplace injuries, such as crushed fingers or hands, amputations, burns, or blindness. Any machine part, function or process that may cause injury must be safeguarded.

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Hazard Corner...

Over the past five years, workplace falls have claimed 3,946 lives in the U.S. Eleven percent (420) of those were falls from scaffolding.

On June 7, 2005, two employees were operating a mast-climbing work platform. They were moving the work platform down and had to adjust the outriggers to avoid striking the building. The outrigger became stuck and the plunge bars would not adjust in or out. The coworker climbed into the building while the deceased remained on the platform and removed a cotter pin from a plunge bar, making it easier to adjust. By doing so, he caused the plunge bar and platform boards to collapse. The victim fell approximately 32 feet to a concrete loading dock and later died from his injuries.

Almost all injuries – from minor to fatal – from scaffolding failures could be avoided with the proper use of fall protection. Any employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level must use the appropriate

measures to prevent falls. Personal fall arrest systems, safety harnesses, lanyards, lifelines, etc., will protect them from falling to the lower level. Employers must also designate a competent person to be responsible for determining the feasibility and safety of providing fall protection for employees erecting or dismantling supported scaffolds.



CONNECTICUT-OSHA ~ Training Update...

Lockout/Tagout: Understanding & Implementing Energy Control Procedures February 9, 2010 Discussion of OSHA's 29 CFR 1910.147 standard requires the isolation of energy sources to prevent accidental re-energization. This class will be held from 10 am-12 noon.

OSHA Recordkeeping February 26, 2010 Learn how to fill out the OSHA Log of Work-Related Injuries & Illnesses (Form 300) accurately and correctly. This class will be held from 9am -noon.

Powered Industrial Trucks March 9, 2010 This workshop includes the basic requirements of the OSHA 29 CFR 1910.178 Powered Industrial Truck Standard which affects both General Industry and Construction material handling operations. This class will be held from 10 am-12 noon.

Construction Site Safety March 25, 2010 Construction managers, first line supervisors, and construction employees will be provided with an overview of four areas of concern on the construction site. Program contents include: fall protection, scaffolding and ladders, electrical hazards, and trenching safety. This class will be held from 10:00 am—12 noon

Work Zone Safety April 6, 2010 Basic guidelines for work zone traffic control and the requirements of Part VI of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices will be discussed. This class will be held from 10am-12 noon.

Trenching & Excavation Safety April 29, 2010 This workshop will provide an overview of 29 CFR 1926.650-652 excavations, including the role of the competent person. The session is designed to assist participants in identifying hazards associated with excavations and related activities. This class will be held from 10am-12 noon.

Breakfast Roundtable This discussion group meets the third Tuesday of every month from 8:15 am to 9:45 am. Pre-registration is required. To be placed on the e-mail distribution list, contact John Able at able.john@dol.gov

Classes are free and held at 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT in Conference Room A/B. To register, contact John Able at able.john@dol.gov. **Pre-registration is required.** For more training information, visit the CONN-OSHA web site www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/osha.htm

Fatality & Casualty Reporting

State & Town: CONN-OSHA (860) 263-6946 (local) or 1-866-241-4060 (toll-free)
Private Employers: Report to Federal OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA(6742)