

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Targets Construction Sites for Safety Rules Compliance

Oakland—Cal/OSHA is focusing on safety compliance at construction sites in the San Francisco Bay Area, following a recent series of fatal accidents in the region. Investigators have been deployed to inspect construction worksites throughout the coming weeks to determine whether adequate measures have been taken to identify safety hazards and prevent injury.

“Construction sites present special challenges to worker safety,” said Christine Baker, Director of the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR). “Employers need to have strong safety programs in place and train their workers to follow procedures.” Cal/OSHA is a division of DIR.

Hazards at construction sites include open trenches and moving equipment at ground level, but elevated areas are particularly dangerous. Four recent incidents in California illustrate the danger. On May 21, a worker at a residential project in San Jose fell to his death from a three-story building. On May 20, a worker on a San Mateo project tumbled 9 feet from a wall sustaining fatal head injuries. The same day in San Diego, a worker near the top of 22-foot rebar column was killed when the column fell on him. On May 18, a construction worker was killed when the train bridge he was dismantling in downtown Riverside collapsed, crushing him. All four accidents are currently under investigation by Cal/OSHA.

Falls are the leading cause of death for construction workers, which is one reason why the federal Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has designated June 2-6 as “[National Safety Stand-Down](#)” week to encourage employers to talk with workers about fall hazards and prevention. Cal/OSHA has posted an industry-specific [fact sheet on fall protection](#) online, and will be participating with federal OSHA in a series of “Safety Stand-Down” events at construction sites across the state to bring emphasis to the importance of fall protection and other safety measures at construction sites.

“Our goal is to raise awareness for everyone working in construction that hazards can be identified and corrected,” said acting Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “Preparation and vigilance are vital to preventing workplace fatalities.”

Fall protection will be among the items Cal/OSHA inspectors will be checking during its inspections, from railings on buildings to personal devices such as hooks that attach to vests. Cal/OSHA’s teams will also examine trench safety, equipment safety and potential site hazards such as power lines. If inspectors find a lack of protection or a serious hazard, they can stop work at the site until the hazards are abated. Employers who fail to comply with Cal/OSHA safety regulations will be cited and ordered to correct the violations.

Cal/OSHA has [resources](#) available for employers and employees on its website, including safety publications for industries such as construction. Cal/OSHA’s [Consultation Program](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers and employee organizations to improve their health and safety programs. For assistance from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Program, employers can call (800) 963-9424.

Additional information on specific issues and work-related topics are available on the [DIR website](#) as well as on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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