



**SAFETY**

Nebraska Building Chapter

## AGC Safety Initiative E-News

April 29, 2021

**OUR SAFETY MISSION:** Help each other enforce safety rules to ensure that every person on construction site goes home safe and healthy at end of the workday.

**Calendar of Events** – [Learn more](#)

[COVID-19 Resources Update](#) Updated information with quick references available.

**Construction Safety Week**, May 3-7. The theme is **Holistic Safety: Be Present. Be Focused. Be Safe.** Our commitment to staying safe and focused on the job is a point of pride and strength that runs across our entire industry. To ensure holistic safety, we must strive to create both a physically and mentally safe environment and make every aspect of our wellbeing part of our safety culture and programs. We must prioritize both physical and psychological safety in the workplace, and how together, they play an important role in our relationships with our team members and with our ability to bring our safest, most productive, best selves to work every day.

### **Ideas to help you underscore your Safety Efforts**

by [Larry Barone](#)

Construction work is a risk. Each year, the industry is rated as one of the most dangerous jobs in America — and for good reason. Your projects are never the same for more than a few days, materials move, people change shifts and deadlines tighten.

These are a few reasons construction fatalities hit a 12-year high in 2019, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Yet more than half of all fatal injuries were related to just four hazards: falls, electrocutions, being struck by and getting caught in — or between — objects. You may recognize these as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Focus Four Hazards. These hazards are more than a coined term — they're a tool. As a senior safety consultant, I've watched firsthand how these pillars can improve your safety efforts. These strategies and hypothetical scenarios should provide at least one new idea or reminder to fine-tune your safety efforts. The hypothetical descriptions used below are not based upon any specific individual, entity or set of facts.

#### ***Fall Hazards***

Fall hazards can appear in many forms, and in 2019, they were the leading cause of non-transportation-related fatalities. Any walking or working surface that could cause your workers to lose their balance can qualify as a fall hazard.

*The hypothetical scenario:* While standing on a loader tire, a technician loses his balance. He falls and strikes his head on the ground 5 feet below, sustaining an injury requiring emergency surgery.

Possible prevention strategies:

- Evaluate machinery and other elevated areas technicians may need to access and develop specific procedures to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls from these areas.
- Use a three-point mounting and dismounting technique for heavy equipment.

- Add guardrails with the proper height requirements when working above ground.
- Require workers to wear fall protection equipment when working higher than 6 feet above the ground.
- Train technicians and other employees who may work at elevated positions on proper safety procedures.
- Monitor employees and enforce procedures involving heights and property controls.
- Provide periodic refresher training on required procedures, machinery, and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Seek input from OSHA or the original equipment manufacturer (OEM) regarding best practices to safely access hard-to-reach areas of machinery.
- Maintain a clutter-free jobsite.

### ***Struck-by Hazards***

Struck-by hazards are the second most common cause of worker fatalities. You can identify these risks as any flying, falling, swinging, or rolling object that could cause forcible contact with a person on your job site.

*The hypothetical scenario:* A subcontractor is working on the third floor and bumps a piece of pipe. The pipe rolls off a ledge and ends up striking a worker on the ground level. The affected worker suffers severe blunt force trauma to their head.

Possible prevention strategies:

- Incorporate toe boards, netting, or guardrails if people are working at different heights.
- Implement pre-task-planning to reduce the likelihood of overlapping work that could cause injuries across or below from where the task is taking place.
- Place warning signs throughout the jobsite to communicate where work is taking place at different heights.
- Provide and require hard hats, glasses, high-visibility vests and PPE specific to each task.
- Remind employees to stay outside the swing radius of heavy equipment and receive acknowledgment from the operator before they approach.
- Only allow trained flaggers to direct traffic.
- Secure tools and materials when working overhead.

### ***Electrocution Hazards***

Like the risks listed prior, electrocution hazards present themselves in a variety of situations. Any situation that could expose someone to a lethal amount of electrical energy is an electrocution hazard.

You may recognize these risks in the form of work that takes place around powerlines or temporary power sources. If you work in a location where wet conditions may impact your project, your team could face an even higher risk of electrocutions.

*The hypothetical scenario:* An employee is using a circular saw to complete a task, which relies on a generator for power. After a brief rainfall, the employee resumes using the saw where a puddle has formed around the electrical cord without a ground fault circuit interrupter in place and an electrical current from the saw's connection electrocutes the employee.

Possible prevention strategies:

- Request employees to complete a job hazard analysis before completing work involving electrical equipment.
- Set a cadence for evaluating the age and wear of electrical equipment.
- Color code extension cords to confirm the date range of the latest inspection.
- Contact utility companies to de-energize and ground power lines before working near power lines.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters when using electrical equipment.

- Ensure ground pins are included on all electrical plugs.
- Establish a methods of procedure (MOP) requirement where employees list out the steps they'll take before working with, or near, energized electrical equipment.
- Require clothing that covers most surface areas of the body in case of sparks.

### ***Caught-In or -Between Hazards***

While caught-in or -between hazards are the last risk mentioned on this list, they require the same dedication as the three discussed above. These hazards are anything that could squeeze, catch, crush, pinch, or compress a person between two or more objects.

*The hypothetical scenario:* An employee begins work in a 10-foot-deep trench without proper shoring installed. The trench collapses, burying the employee. Trained personnel dig the employee out and the employee survives with severe injuries.

Possible prevention strategies:

- Install shoring, sloping, shielding, and benching systems based on soil classifications before starting trench work.
- Assign a competent person to be present for trench examinations and — if necessary — system implementation.
- Place ladders within 25 feet of workers for trenches deeper than 4 feet.
- Equip noise and light features that activate when heavy equipment moves forward or backward.
- Provide PPE such as hard hats, safety shoes and high-visibility vests.

### **Commit to a Safer Year**

Timelines, planning and quality all contribute to an effective project. But every year, the most successful projects finish with the least number of injuries. Remember, others are here to support your efforts. Consult your local experts, insurer and OSHA guidelines for more help managing the complex risks your team faces. Good luck in the year ahead.

### **Safety Initiative Goals:**

As an AGC Nebraska Building Chapter member, are you participating with:

- 100% of all AGC members and other contractors on AGC jobsites enforcing OSHA standards as they apply to falls, electrical safety and possible another topic.
- 100% of all AGC members will have set their own company goals to improve safety in their firm and have a way to measure progress towards the goal.
- 100% of all AGC members will encourage and support all contractors on their jobsites to set their own company goals for improving safety.

They say that if an accident is predictable, it's preventable. Thanks for making recommendations to improve our safety practices.