

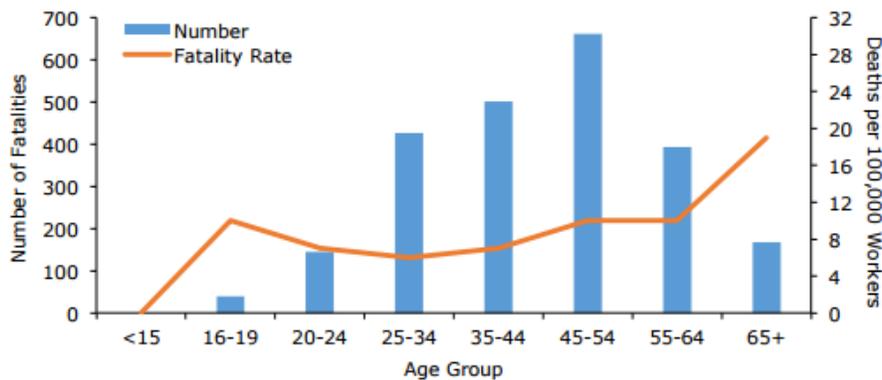
SAFETY FLASH



Preventing Fatalities in Construction: AGING WORKFORCE

The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America commissioned a study that takes a deeper dive into existing information on fatalities using fatality reports from 2010-2012. In this study, age and ethnicity were reviewed and it identified construction workers between the ages of 35-54 accounted for 50% of fatalities [Figure 19]. Workers under 25 and over 65 represented relatively small proportions of fatalities however when employment numbers were factored in, fatality rates showed a steady increase from age 35. The 65+ age group actually had the highest fatality rate (19 per 100,000 workers) while experiencing only 7% of the total fatalities, suggesting that this group does have a higher risk of death in the workplace. [See orange line in figure 19].

Figure 19. Number of Fatalities and Annual Fatality Rate, by Age Group, 2010-2012



An Aging Workforce

The proportion of older workers in construction is increasing and will continue to increase in future years. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there are staggering statistics to support this. The share of the youth labor force (workers ages 16 to 24) is expected to decrease from 13.6% in 2010 to 11.2% in 2020. The primary working age group between (25 and 54) is projected to decline from 66.9% of the labor force in 2010 to 63.7% in 2020. By contrast, the share of workers (55 years and older) is anticipated to leap from 19.5% to 25.2% of the labor force during the same period. Older workers may hesitate to switch to less strenuous occupations because a change would entail reduced income, limit pension, curtail health benefits, or require having to learn a new type of work. However, those declining to do so are increasing their risk for becoming a potential fatality statistic.

Best Practice!

- Understand the age profile of your workforce, give consideration to task assignment, work hours, and performance expectations relative to physical capabilities of the worker.
- Stretch and Flex is a simple, effective activity that can decrease the risk of injury and increase performance.
- Properly match the physical requirements of the job to the physical capabilities of each employee.
- Encourage younger workers to join the rewarding careers in construction.