

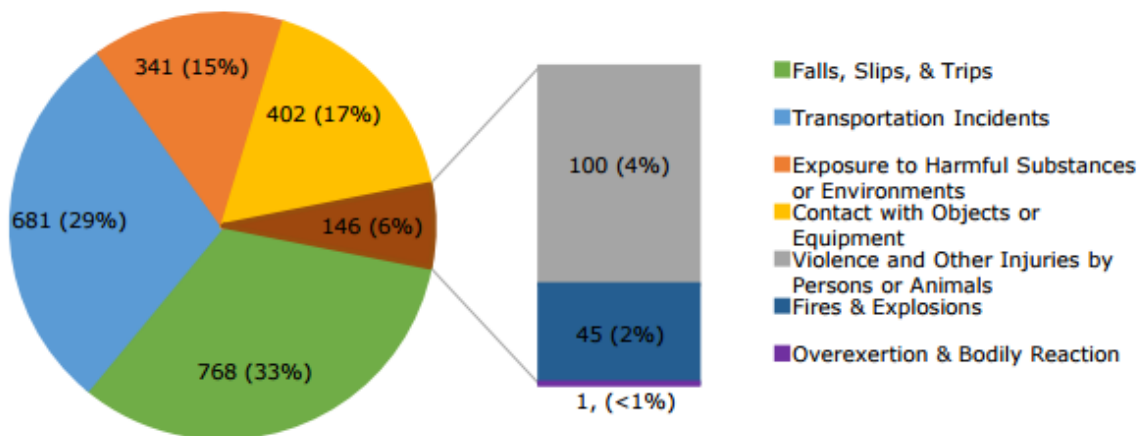
SAFETY FLASH



Preventing Fatalities in Construction: FALLS

The Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America commissioned a study that takes a deeper dive into existing information on fatalities. This study used fatality reports from 2010-2012. In this study, falls remain the most common cause of deaths in construction. One-third of all fatalities were a result of Falls, Slips & Trips [Figure 14]. Falls were typically occurred from buildings, other structural elements, and ladders. Out of 2,338 construction related fatalities from 2010-2012, 33% of those fatalities were associated with falls.

Figure 14. Number and Percentage of Fatalities, by Event or Exposure, 2010-2012



How do we prevent falls?

Almost all construction projects create unprotected sides and edges, wall openings, or floor holes at some point during construction. If these sides and openings are not protected, injuries from falls may result, ranging from minor sprains and concussions and possible fatality. When employees are exposed to fall of 6 feet or more above a lower level, fall prevention or fall protection methods shall be used. When evaluating potential fall hazards on projects, it is important to remember that **fall prevention systems** such as guard rails and hole covers will help to eliminate falls in construction. **Fall arrest systems** will not eliminate a fall but rather keep an employee from contacting the lower level. Focus efforts on prevention through design, i.e. separating workers from the possibility that a fall can occur through alternative designs, means, and methods.

Best Practice!

- Use fall **prevention** systems such as guardrails, rather than fall **arrest** systems. Fall prevention will limit exposures to fall hazards.
- Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created during construction.
- Use fall **protection** methods whenever employees are exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more above a lower level.
- Continuously audit your site for fall hazards and correct them immediately.