

# SAFETY FLASH



## Preventing Fatalities in Construction: SEASONS & MONTHS

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 AGC also identified that fatalities increased steadily during the spring (March, April, and May) and summer (June, July, and August) months and declined in the autumn and winter months [Figure 8]. Based on this study, the highest number of fatalities occurred in the summer (32%) and the lowest in the winter (19%). As you see, the month of August had the highest percentage of fatalities at 12% and February had the lowest at 5%. The ratios of fatalities to employment also followed a similar pattern [Figure 9].

Figure 8. Number and Percentage of Fatalities, by Month of the Year, 2010-2012

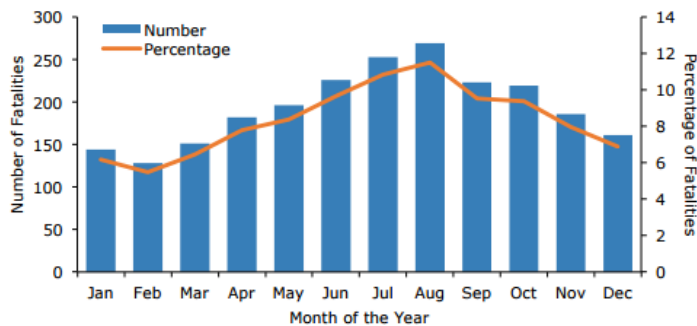
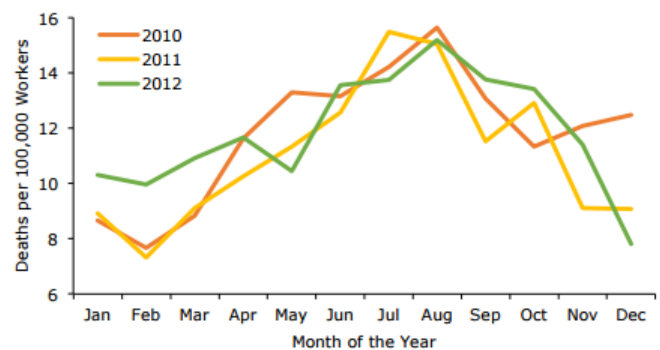


Figure 9. Fatality Rates, by Month of the Year, 2010-2012



### More Fatalities in Summer

During the summer months, fatalities increase compared to the winter months due to the increase of man-hours being worked during the summer months. More construction companies are actively working with increased manpower during this time which equals greater exposure, creating more potential for fatalities. Summer months and hot temperatures also bring other complications to our projects. Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, and strenuous physical activity have high potential for causing heat related illnesses and other stressors on the body. When working in a hot environment, the body must get rid of excess heat through sweating to maintain a stable internal temperature. If the body cannot get rid of this excess heat, its core temperature rises. This rise in body temperature can cause lack of concentration, making it difficult to focus on a task which could lead to a possible incident due to a lack of attention.

## Best Practice!

- Analyze critical tasks to determine if they can be conducted during cooler parts of the day to minimize employee exposures.
- Provide drinking water, rest regimens, and shaded locations for break times to reduce heat-related stressors.
- Increase worker awareness of heat-related symptoms during summer months to prevent heat illnesses.
- Increase hazard awareness training as manpower increases during warmer months.