



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS NEWS

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AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS SUPPORT NEW EFFORT TO PREVENT CONSTRUCTION WORKER FALLS

DES PLAINES, IL (August 23, 2012) — Each year thousands of workers are injured and 225 die from construction-related falls. In order to provide additional tools to prevent worker injuries and fatalities in the construction industry, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) is joining with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to support a new 'Fall Prevention Campaign' (<http://stopconstructionfalls.com/>).

The national campaign to raise awareness about how to prevent falls in construction is also supported by state governments, private industries, trade associations, academia and professional and labor organizations. It focuses on providing prevention information and training materials on three major types of falls: from roofs, from ladders, and from scaffolds. More than 10,000 construction workers were injured as a result of falling while working from heights in the U.S. and another 225 were killed in 2010.

Ron Sokol, ASSE member, who also represents ASSE on the NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Construction Sector that developed the campaign and is President and CEO of the Safety Council-Texas City, noted that more is needed to be done to prevent falls, such as this new initiative.

"This effort took some time to develop as we 'proof tested' all of the information in this campaign with workers and employers – in English and Spanish, but was completed on a very aggressive schedule for a campaign of this magnitude," Sokol said. "We want to reach as many people as possible to prevent construction workers and others from falling while at work."

Sokol went on to note that occupational safety, health and environmental (SH&E) professionals work with construction workers and employers on providing the safest workplaces possible as well as with personal protection equipment (PPE) aimed at protecting those workers in their environments, and, much more. This new effort will provide additional tools.

"We are trained to prevent injuries and illnesses and are used to working in all industries on all sites – from huge skyscrapers in Singapore to oil rigs to manufacturing plants to residential homes and apartment buildings. We work everywhere," Sokol said.

Some of the risks involve working on sloping roofs, from heights, at the edge of buildings, possible slipping, carrying equipment and more. To help construction workers stay safe, SH&E professionals also utilize 'consensus standards' such as *Safety Requirements for Self-Retracting Devices for Personal Fall Arrest & Rescue Systems*, *Scaffolding Safety Requirements*, and *Emergency Procedures for Construction and Demolition Sites* to name a few. Additionally, ASSE's largest practice specialty is the Construction Practice Specialty group, found at www.asse.org/practicespecialties/construction/. This group, made up of top construction safety professionals with global experience, share best practices, produces a newsletter, meets annually and sponsors construction-related sessions at ASSE's annual professional development conference in an ongoing effort to stay on the cutting edge of construction safety.

OSHA's new fall prevention web page has detailed information in English and Spanish at www.osh.gov/stopfalls along with the www.stopconstructionfalls.com web site from the Center for Construction Research and Training with information from industry, nonprofit and academic sources. In addition, Sokol said the fall prevention literature will be translated into seven additional languages by OSHA for broader distribution. Also, the campaign information and resources will continually be updated.

“Planning ahead, identifying risks, providing training along with the right equipment will help prevent construction worker falls,” Sokol said. “The information from the new Fall Prevention Campaign will be invaluable. We urge everyone to share it with their company, friends, co-workers, community, schools and more. We are all part of the solution to help prevent falls.”

Founded in 1911, the Des Plaines, IL-based ASSE is the oldest professional safety society and is committed to protecting people, property and the environment. Its 35,000 occupational safety, health and environmental professional members manage, supervise, research and consult on safety, health, transportation and environmental issues in all industries, government, labor and education. Go to www.asse.org, www.stopconstructionfalls.com, <http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/construction/> or <https://www.asse.org/cartpage.php?link=standards> for more information.