

## Hamlet Chicken Processing Plant Fire

The first article in this series concerned employees who died in a fire in 1911 when their exit doors were locked by their employer (Spring 2011 newsletter). This article is also about death to employees by fire when their exits doors were locked by their employer. These last deaths occurred 80 years later in 1991, but it seems little was learned in the interim. Twenty-five employees were killed and 54 injured in the fire in Hamlet, North Carolina, at the Imperial Foods chicken processing plant. The fire started when a hydraulic line that drove a conveyor failed and hydraulic fluid spattered onto heating lines for a cooker and vaporized. The vapor then went into the flame of the gas fired cooker. The fire spread rapidly, causing a panic as soybean oil, chicken, and melting insulation caused a curtain of smoke.



(continued on page 2)

## Global Harmonization Pictograms!

The changes to the hazard communication standard recently made by OSHA are primarily in the areas of hazard classification, labeling, and material safety data sheets (now called safety data sheets). Hazard classification must be accomplished by the chemical manufacturer, importer, or distributor and the classification information placed on the labels and safety data sheets for the benefit of the employers and employees. The labels on incoming containers of hazardous chemicals will appear to the employers and employees as the biggest change. To meet globally harmonized criteria, each label must contain an appropriate pictogram. Employers, please become familiar with these pictograms so you will be able to explain the information to your employees by December 1, 2013. By law the border of the diamond in the pictograms must be the color red.



Acute Toxicity



Flammables and Pyrophorics



Hazardous to the Aquatic Environment



Oxidizers



Health Hazard



Corrosive to Metals and Skin



Compressed Gases



Skin Irritation



Explosives

# It's Official: OSHA Doesn't Kill Jobs. It Stops Jobs from Killing Workers 2

Reprinted from from OSHA Quick Takes Vol. 11, Issue 12, May 29, 2012

A landmark new study by business school economists at the University of California and Harvard University confirms that OSHA's inspections not only prevent workers from getting hurt on the job, they also save billions of dollars for employers through reduced workers' compensation costs.



The study, entitled "Randomized Government Safety Inspections Reduce Worker Injuries with No Detectable Job Loss," appeared in the top scientific journal Science and reports that workplace injury claims dropped 9.4% at businesses in the four years following a randomized OSHA inspection, compared with employers who were not inspected. Those same employers also saved an average of 26% on workers' compensation costs, compared to similar companies who were not inspected. This means that the average employer saved \$355,000 (in 2011 dollars) as a result of an OSHA inspection. Benefits were observed among both small and large employers. Nationwide, these savings to employers amount to an estimated \$6 billion.

As researchers David Levine, Michael Toffel, and Matthew Johnson explain, "The benefits of a randomized safety inspection appear to be substantial. These results do not support the hypothesis that OSHA regulations and inspections on average have little value in improving health and safety." Furthermore, the researchers found "no evidence that these improvements came at the expense of employment, sales, credit ratings, or firm survival."

Following an interview with study co-author and assistant professor Michael Toffel, Michael Blanding of the Harvard Business School newsletter described the enormity of the findings:

Those who charge that OSHA regulations cost business money have it completely wrong. In fact, the regulations save money. The magnitude of the results surprised even Toffel and Levine, who expected perhaps a small savings if any. But the strength of the findings, they say, should persuade even skeptical antiregulatory critics.

## FACTS

**9.4% drop in injury claims at workplaces in the four years following an inspection**

**26% average savings on workers' compensation costs compared to similar, non-inspected companies**

**\$355,000 average savings for an employer (small or large) as a result of an OSHA inspection**

**\$6 billion estimated savings to employers nationwide**



Karla Davis, Commissioner

Steve Hawkins, Administrator

220 French Landing Drive  
Nashville, TN 37243

(615)741-2793  
FAX (615)741-3325

Accident Reporting  
1-800-249-8510  
TDD 1-800-475-1351

[www.tn.gov/labor-wfd](http://www.tn.gov/labor-wfd)

Inquiries regarding  
Together With TOSHA  
should be directed to the  
TOSHA Division  
Training Section:  
(615)741-5726



Together with TOSHA is a quarterly publication of the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development; May 2012; Auth. No. 337352; 17,500 copies; \$0.07 per copy. The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development is committed to principles of equal opportunity, equal access, and affirmative action. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

## Hamlet Chicken Processing Plant Fire *Continued*

Most of the fatalities were to workers at the rear of the building where exit and fire doors were locked. Investigators found indentations left on at least one door by people trying to kick the door open. Emergency response was delayed because telephones inside the building could not be used. There were concentrations of bodies around fire exits and inside a large walk-in freezer where panicked workers had sought shelter. The owner of the company pled guilty to involuntary manslaughter and served fewer than four years of a 19-year-and-11 month prison sentence.



Reference  
U.S. Fire Administration Technical Report Series: Chicken Processing Plant Fires, USFA-TR-057  
June/September 1991

# Fall Protection PART II

By Bradley Stallard, TOSHA Occupational Safety Specialist

The problems associated with fall related deaths are vast and numerous. Work related falls cause injury, death, and great monetary loss as described in the spring edition of this newsletter. A study was conducted to investigate the causes and reasons for fall fatalities in the state of Tennessee. TOSHA accident investigation records were examined for fatalities that occurred from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2010. The investigation narratives, findings, citations, and conclusions were analyzed.

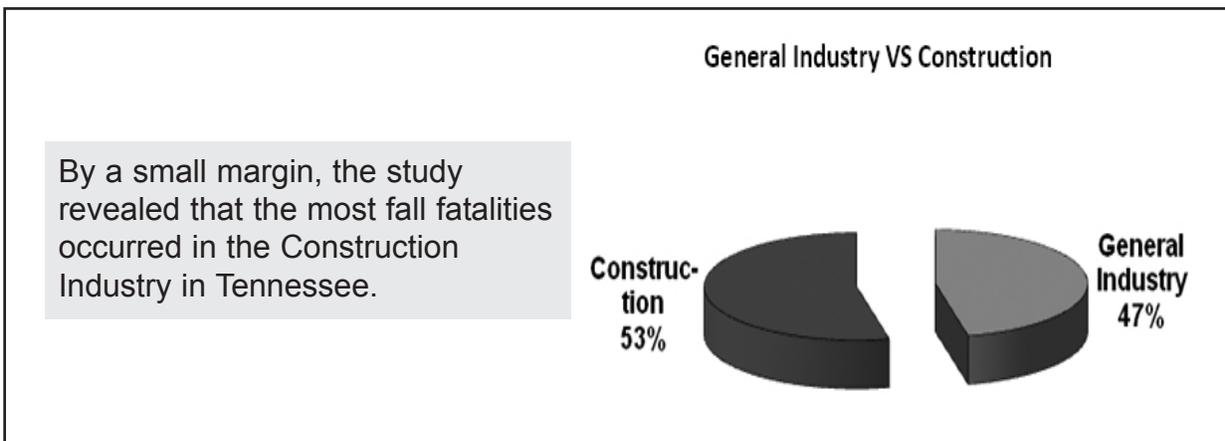
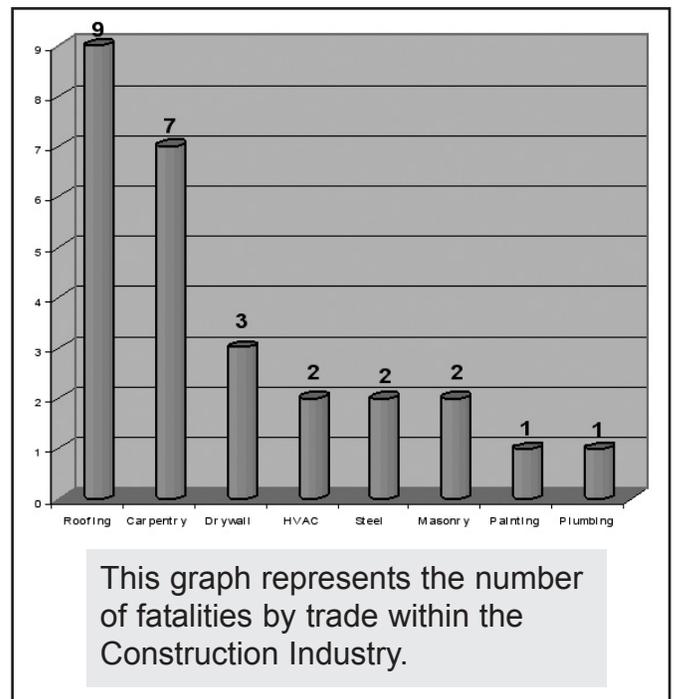
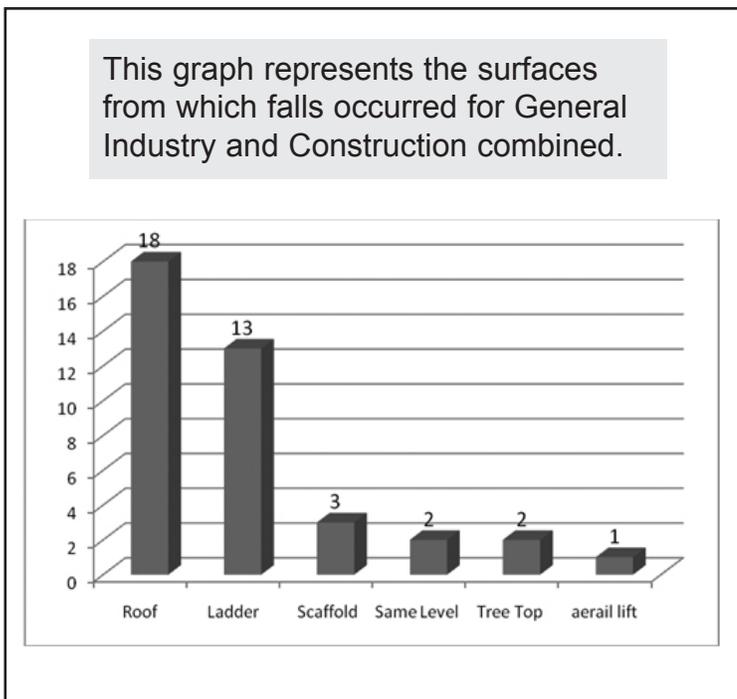
## Assumptions

This study is limited geographically to the state of Tennessee; the study will only include private industry and construction incidents; not all fatalities are reported to TOSHA (some employers are not aware of the reporting requirement and some simply ignore it); investigations are sometimes performed several days after the accident, and witnesses may suffer from recall bias.

## Limitations

Normal working conditions will apply with reference to weather, wind, rain, snow, and ice; employees are assumed not to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol; it is assumed that neither the victim's age nor illness had an effect on the accident; the facts gathered and tabulated during this study are dependent upon the opinions and written report of professional investigators.

Some of the preliminary results are as follows:



# L EARN & LIVE **A TOSHA Case File Summary**

A 28-year-old member of a land surveying crew was killed when he was struck by a motor vehicle while he was standing on the shoulder of a public road. A crew of three employees including the victim was surveying the land adjacent to the road. They worked most of the day in the fields nearby, past a roadside market, and across the bridge over a nearby interstate. Finally, they worked their way back toward their starting point. The victim had been standing by the roadway near the market only a few minutes when a vehicle driven by a member of the public veered to the right from the traffic lane and onto the shoulder. The victim was holding a rod waiting for his co-workers to get the level set up; he may have had his back to the oncoming vehicle. The vehicle struck the victim, causing mortal injuries. Co-workers did not see the accident but heard a thud and turned to see the deceased on the hood of the vehicle.

#### **To Prevent Such an Incident from Happening:**

1. Use a spotter to warn a worker of the danger of oncoming vehicles.
2. Protect employees from oncoming motorists by warning signs positioned in advance of the work area.

