

Fatal accident highlights need for more safety regulations in PA

The recent building collapse in Philadelphia highlights the dangers of operating demolition equipment and why it is important for companies to properly train workers on how to use this potentially dangerous equipment.

Last week, a construction worker was using an excavator on a four-story building that was in the process of being demolished in downtown Philadelphia when the building collapsed and fell on a Salvation Army thrift store. The accident killed six people and injured several others.

An investigation of the accident found that the construction worker operating the equipment had marijuana in his system and should not have been using the equipment at the demolition site. The worker has since been arrested and charged with involuntary manslaughter and other criminal charges for causing the fatal accident.

While the worker is being held criminally liable for the accident, the demolition contractor is being accused of violating safety regulations and could be found liable for the construction accident. Safety officials also said that the owner of the building being demolished should have selected a more qualified contractor to complete the demolition.

The tragic construction accident has already spurred the city into action to try to prevent future accidents at demolition and construction sites in Philadelphia. Officials have already started inspecting other demolition sites in the city to make sure that safety regulations are followed to keep workers and the public safe.

Reports show that the city does not do a good job regulating demolition contractors. In fact, the entire state of Pennsylvania does not require licenses for demolition contractors, meaning that some contractors may have little to no experience or qualifications to complete the work safely.

This is a serious workplace safety issue as the public as well as construction and contract workers are at risk for being injured or killed due to safety hazards and negligence by the construction company. Workers should be aware of the safety hazards they face and report any concerns to their employer as well as file a report with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration if no action is taken by their employer.

Source: CBS News, "[Philadelphia building collapse leads to charges against equipment operator](#)," June 7, 2013