

Workplace fatalities increase for construction, oil workers

As the housing market recovers and the energy industry continues to boom, reports on workplace safety show that the improving economy may be having a dangerous impact on certain industry workers in the U.S.

The Labor Department recently reported that both the construction industry and gas and oil industry saw an increase in fatal injuries in the workplace, clearly not following the overall trend of declining workplace fatalities reported in 2012. Fatal workplace injuries increased by 23 percent in the gas and oil industry last year, and fatalities increased by five percent in 2012 in the construction industry.

Overall, fatal work injuries declined last year by seven percent compared to deaths in 2011, according to the Labor Department. Unfortunately, workplace safety in the construction and gas and oil industry appear to be much riskier than safety officials may have realized.

The Labor Department said that job gains in the gas and oil industry as well as the improving housing market have led to more workers in the gas and oil and construction industry. The increase in crude oil production has increased, especially with states like Pennsylvania allowing oil extraction from shale formations.

This increase has led to more workers and not surprisingly, more fatal injuries and accidents as the booming industry may not properly train workers or companies may take shortcuts to get work done faster. This could also be true for construction workers who feel pressured into completing construction at a faster pace than normal and workers may not be able to take the same safety precautions they did in the past.

Workers in these industries should be aware of the risks they face while working and report any safety hazards to their supervisor and to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Workers should remember that it is their employer's responsibility to keep them safe and if they are injured on-the-job, they may be entitled to receive workers' compensation benefits.

Source: The Wall Street Journal, "[Downside to Housing, Energy Booms: More Workplace Deaths](#)," Jeffrey Sparshott, Aug. 22, 2013