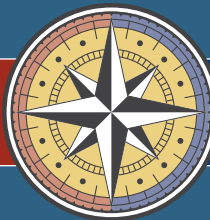


THE

CONTRACTOR'S



COMPASS

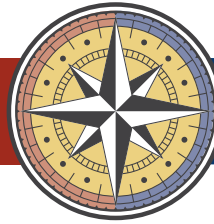
Safety in a Changing World: Adapt and Innovate



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THE CONTRACTOR'S COMPASS



EDITORIAL PURPOSE

The Contractor's Compass is the monthly educational journal of the Foundation of the American Subcontractors Association, Inc. (FASA) and part of FASA's Contractors' Knowledge Network. FASA was established in 1987 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity to support research, education and public awareness. Through its Contractors' Knowledge Network, FASA is committed to forging and exploring the critical issues shaping subcontractors and specialty trade contractors in the construction industry. The journal is designed to equip construction subcontractors with the ideas, tools and tactics they need to thrive. The views expressed by contributors to The Contractor's Compass do not necessarily represent the opinions of FASA or the American Subcontractors Association, Inc. (ASA).

MISSION

To educate and equip subcontractors and suppliers with the education and resources they need to thrive in the construction industry. Additionally, FASA raises awareness about issues critical to and about construction in the United States.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

The Contractor's Compass is a free monthly publication for ASA members and nonmembers. For questions about subscribing, please contact communications@asa-hq.com.

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EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

Contributing authors are encouraged to submit a brief abstract of their article idea before providing a full-length feature article. Feature articles should be no longer than 1,500 words and comply with The Associated Press style guidelines. Article submissions become the property of ASA and FASA. The editor reserves the right to edit all accepted editorial submissions for length, style, clarity, spelling and punctuation. Send abstracts and submissions for *The Contractor's Compass* to communications@asa-hq.com.

ABOUT ASA

ASA is a nonprofit trade association of union and non-union subcontractors and suppliers. Through a nationwide network of local and state ASA associations, members receive information and education on relevant business issues and work together to protect their rights as an integral part of the construction team. For more information about becoming an ASA member, contact ASA at 1004 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314-3588, (703) 684-3450, membership@asa-hq.com, or visit the ASA Web site, www.asaonline.com.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Dear Readers:

Time has just dragged this past year. NOT! Yeah, I know every president says how great their time was - and it's a fact for me as well. Sure, it's hectic, sometimes frustrating, but ALWAYS rewarding. Glad I'm a part of this organization, and encourage others to step up and take a leadership role - whether in your chapter or at the national level. You'll be glad you did. Honest.

The annual Board Meeting and Fly-In was last week, so that's still top of mind for me. Read about it in our "Always Something Awesome" segment on **page 6**. Some of the other activities and accomplishments that stick out for me this past year are:

- Andrew Christ from Compass Constructors testified at the **House Small Business Committee**, and SBA Administrator, Isabel Guzman, repaid the visit, shortly thereafter. It just goes to show how stepping up, putting yourself out there, and getting uncomfortable, sometimes pays off. What you do, what you say, has an impact.
- Our **ThinkTank** meetings - where members start to figure out our priorities, ideas to address, have been eye-opening. Come join us as we take this association forward.
- **SUBExcel** - Our grand event each year, was memorable - as always, with a little flooding excitement thrown in for good measure. Remember to bring your Boots and Bling to Oklahoma City next year - this time in the Fall - **September 24 - 27, 2025**.
- But really, it's all the smaller one-on-one **meetings with YOU** that really remind me how amazing this group is, how we get things done. We all work so hard - but it's when we come together with a common goal that we can change the construction industry for the better. Thank you!
- And a reminder about **ASA's Attorneys' Council meeting** on Friday, June 28, 2024. If you have any questions, please contact Shannon Oscar at "[soscar at asa-hq.com](mailto:soscar@asa-hq.com)".

Temperatures are rising...a lot. Take note, and be prepared. We're focusing on safety in this month's issue. I just talked about relationships - read about how that matters in safety too. Some thoughts about the Key Bridge in Baltimore, PFAS in construction, and other relevant topics.

It's been an honor to be your president this past year. I'm passing the gavel to Ray Moya of Prime Electric. He's no stranger to ASA, and I know he's anxious to leave his mark on this excellent association. Congratulations, Ray! I'm with you buddy. Let's go!!

Brad Miller
President, ASA - 2023-24

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CONTRACTOR COMMUNITY



NASBP Education Now Available for ASA Members

The National Association of Surety Bond Producers (NASBP), an ASA Alliance Partner, offers a host of resources and educational programs focused on bonding and risk management for both producers and contractors. ASA members can now access SuretyLearn and SuretyLearn for Contractors at member rates by using a discount code at registration on the NASBP site. Check your chapter emails, or contact your Chapter EDs for the code. SuretyLearn for Contractors helps to orient small and emerging contractors to the path for achieving surety credit, through both free and paid resources and live and recorded educational programs.

First Inaugural Construction Hike for Hope



The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention held their first **Construction**

Hike for Hope in six cities throughout Florida on Apr 20, 2024. The are multiple efforts to remove the stigma of suicide, talking openly about the struggles and issues specifically in the construction industry that are gaining momentum. The organization is looking to spread the word, and is now scheduled in six other states (Arizona, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia). **Reach out** about organizing an event in your community.

2024 Construction Hike for Hope

ASA Urges Delaying the Overtime Rule

ASA, along with the Partnership to Protect Workplace Opportunity (PPWO), requests that the Wage and Hour Division (WHD) stay the effective date of its overtime final rule published in the Federal Register on April 26, 2024, (89 FR 32842) to allow for judicial review, as the rule is currently being challenged in two federal

courts. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit is considering the Department of Labor's (DOL) statutory authority to implement a minimum salary threshold related to the overtime pay requirements under the Fair Labor Standards Act, while a lawsuit filed on May 22, 2024, before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas is challenging the legality of the substantial increase to the minimum salary threshold included in the final rule as well as the rule's triennial automatic updates to the threshold. The Biden administration has already delayed implementation of several final rules pending legal challenges, so there is precedent for this action.

A stay of the overtime rule would protect workers whose terms and conditions of employment may be negatively impacted by the policy changes within the rule. Many workers will be reclassified if the final rule goes into effect, resulting in them losing workplace status, access to benefits, flexible work arrangements, or career development opportunities. These changes should not be made lightly, as the resulting low employee morale and/or decrease in productivity cannot easily be recovered if the rule is eventually invalidated by the courts. Finally, this week, Rep. Walberg (R-MI) and Sen. Braun (R-IN) introduced a Congressional Review Act (CRA) challenge to nullify the overtime rule.

UPCOMING WEBINAR

Five Secrets to a Healthier Cash Flow

Tuesday, August 13, 2024
(12 PM - 1 PM ET)

REGISTER NOW

As a subcontractor, you're constantly financing your clients' projects. You're funding the job and doing the work before you're paid. And getting paid isn't easy. Only 5% of subcontractors report always being paid on time, and the average time to get paid in construction is 90 days. It's time to buck the status quo! In this session, Claire Wilson will share best practices and strategies for getting paid faster and better managing cash flow on projects.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify and address the main causes of payment delays
- Detect billing red flags and intervene

- Optimize change order management
- Implement billing projections and cash flow forecasts

Presented By: Claire Wilson. Claire is the Head of Construction Solutions at Sitrine. Previously, she was a project manager at Tishman Construction in New York City, where she worked on major projects like Hudson Yards and JP Morgan's Corporate Headquarters. She serves on the Bay Area Subcontractors Association (BASA) board, is an active member of CFMA San Francisco, and has spoken at numerous regional and national construction conferences.

WASHINGTON, DC FLY-IN

A great day on Capitol Hill for ASA

On June 11 and 12, ASA advocated on Capitol Hill to ensure the voices of subcontractors, who make up the three-fourths of the construction industry, are heard throughout the halls of Congress.



The visit coincided with an extremely busy time on Capitol Hill as Congress works toward finalizing the FY25 Appropriations Bills, the Reauthorization of the Farm Bill, and the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act, which contains procurement-related issues important to the construction industry.

Thirty ASA members participated in 21 Senate meetings and 23 House meetings to discuss a variety of issues that face our organization with their home state Members. ASA members also participated in several group meetings:

Senate Small Business Committee- Members met with the Senate Small Business Committee's Legal Counsel to discuss federal procurement issues such as change order reform, along with the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA) and its effect on small businesses. Members also discussed the expiring tax provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, and shared support of H.R. 7024 *Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act*, which passed the House and is up for consideration in the Senate.

Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL) - Members met with Sen. Tuberville's office to discuss the Senator's bill to repeal the Corporate Transparency Act (S.4297). ASA supports this legislation, which will help small businesses by ending the CTA's onerous reporting requirements.

Sen. Maizie Hirono (D-HI) - Members met with Senator Hirono's office to discuss federal procurement issues. Her position on the Senate Armed Services and Small Business Committees is valuable and we appreciate her advocacy on our issues.

Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND) - Members met with key members of the Senator's staff to discuss his legislation, *The Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act*. ASA supports this legislation, which seeks to improve project delivery and reduce risks of default on federally financed water infrastructure projects by requiring surety bonds on public private projects.

Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ)- Sen. Kelly is the Democrat co-sponsor of the *Water Infrastructure Subcontractor and Taxpayer Protection Act*. Members had an opportunity to meet with key staff in Sen. Kelly's office to discuss their continued support of this legislation, which requires surety bonds for federally funded water infrastructure projects.

House Small Business Committee Minority and Majority Staff -

Members engaged senior staff for both the minority and majority on federal procurement issues, especially those previously highlighted by ASA member Andrew Christ at a House Small Business Committee hearing on February 6, 2024. Members also advocated for the repeal of the Corporate Transparency Act due to the compliance burdens placed on small businesses.

Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN) -

Members met with Rep. Stauber, who is the sponsor of H.R 2726, *Small Business Payment for Performance Act* which mandates quick payment

for contractors following change orders. Rep. Stauber is also Co-chair of the Congressional Construction Procurement Caucus, and we are grateful for his time and continued advocacy on our issues.

Rep. Bost (R-IL) - Members met with Rep. Bost's key staff to discuss bonding issues. Rep. Bost is the Republican sponsor of H.R. 1740, the legislation requiring bonding for federally funded public private partnership projects. ASA supports this legislation to protect taxpayer funds, workers, subcontractors, and suppliers. We appreciate Rep. Bost's continued efforts to amend the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act with this legislation.



ASA Texas Members met with Rep. Beth Van Duyne (R-TX)



ASA Arizona Members met with Senator Kelly (D-AZ)'s office



ASA Members met with Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN)



ASA Members met with Senator Tuberville (R-AL)'s staff



ASA Members met with Senator Moran (R-KS)'s office



Meeting with the House Small Business Committee's Professional Staff responsible for procurement issues.



OUR VOICES WERE HEARD!

ASA's Capitol Hill Fly-In is an important opportunity for members to engage legislators and key committee staff members on our shared priorities. The ASA's government relations team is always working to advance these priorities, but it is your voice and collective experience as constituents that drives our message even further. Thank you to all the members who took time from their busy schedules to advocate for these critical issues that impact subcontractors.

Promoting Prompt Payments through Legislative Action

A core issue for the ASA is the enforcement of prompt payment to subcontractors and suppliers, especially concerning change orders. The organization supports the *"Small Business Payment for Performance Act of 2023"* (H.R. 2726), which mandates quick payment for contractors following change orders. Timely payments are vital to maintaining cash flow for subcontractors, ensuring they can meet their financial obligations and maintain stability in their operations.

Enhancing P3 Bonding Requirements

ASA champions H.R. 1740, which seeks to affirm that existing payment and performance security requirements extend to infrastructure projects financed through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), including Public-Private Partnerships (P3s). This legislation is crucial for surety professionals as it upholds stringent bonding requirements, ensuring that all parties are adequately protected in large-scale infrastructure projects.

Reforming Retainage Practices

Another significant focus is the reform of retainage practices. The ASA advocates for reducing the maximum retainage rate from 10% to 5%. High retainage rates can strain subcontractors who must front the cost of labor and materials, impacting their liquidity and financial health. This change would alleviate financial pressure and improve the economic conditions for subcontractors.

Ensuring Fairness in Bid Listing

The ASA supports the "Stop Unfair Bid Shopping Act" (SUBS Act), which mandates that general contractors on federal construction contracts valued at over \$1.5 million list the subcontractors for work valued at more than \$100,000. This act aims to curb bid shopping, promoting fairness and transparency in the procurement process, thereby protecting subcontractors from being undercut after bidding.

Streamlining Permitting Processes

The ASA continues to advocate for streamlining project review and approval processes through the "One Federal Decision" framework and other enhancements under the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (IIJA). Simplifying these processes can reduce delays and costs, benefiting the entire construction timeline and reducing risks associated with surety bonds.

Tax Reform

In advance of large-scale tax legislation that will be forthcoming in 2025, ASA supports the following provisions:

- the repeal of the Corporate Transparency Act or, at the least, support modifications that ease the regulatory compliance burdens on small business;
- passage of the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act of 2024 (H.R. 7024). Specifically, support for the business tax provisions of Title II of H.R. 7042 which provide for R&D benefits as well as extended bonus depreciation with increased

limits on business expensing for certain assets; and the tax working groups of Congress as they prepare for the expiring provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 (TCJA). Specifically, we support the renewal of the Qualified Business Income Deduction (199A) and all extensions of the provisions related to business succession planning (e.g., increased estate and gift tax limitations).

Supporting Workforce Development

Workforce development remains a priority, with the ASA supporting apprenticeship funding opportunities and opposing the misclassification of workers as independent contractors. Strengthening the workforce is essential for the growth and sustainability of the construction industry.

Encouraging Construction Procurement Reform

Lastly, the ASA supports the House Construction Procurement Caucus, focusing on improving construction procurement policies. This caucus serves as a platform for addressing issues that affect the construction industry and ensuring that procurement practices are equitable and efficient.

These legislative priorities not only address the immediate needs of subcontractors. By supporting these initiatives, ASA helps create a more predictable and fair business environment for all stakeholders in the construction industry.



Construction Data & Figures

Nonresidential Construction Adds 17,100 Jobs in May

The construction industry added 21,000 jobs on net in May, according to an ***Associated Builders and Contractors*** analysis of data released today by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. On a year-over-year basis, industry employment has increased by 251,000 jobs, an increase of 3.1%.

Nonresidential construction employment increased by 17,100 positions on net in May, with growth registered in all three major subcategories. Nonresidential specialty trade added the most jobs, with employment increasing by 13,000 positions. Nonresidential building and heavy and civil engineering added 3,000 and 1,100 jobs, respectively.

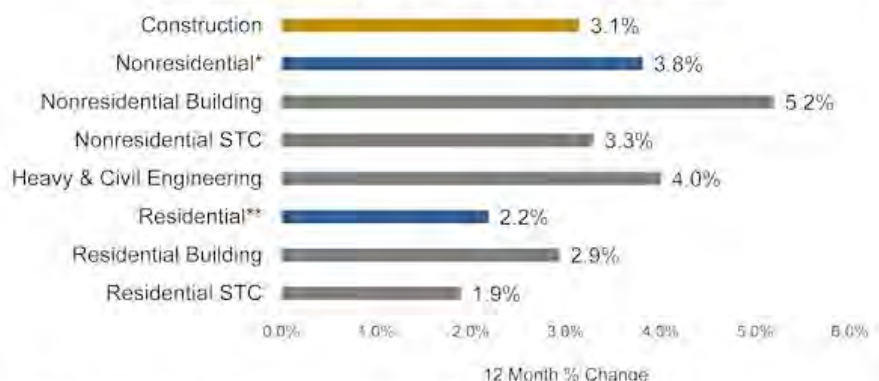
The construction unemployment rate fell to 3.9% in May. Unemployment across all industries rose from 3.9% in April to 4.0% last month.

Construction Employment Statistics: May 2024

	May 2024	April 2024	May 2023	1-Month Net Change	12-Month Net Change	12-Month % Change
Employment						
Construction	8,228,000	8,207,000	7,977,000	21,000	251,000	3.1%
Nonresidential	4,869,300	4,852,200	4,690,300	17,100	179,000	3.8%
Nonresidential building	920,600	917,600	875,100	3,000	45,500	5.2%
Nonresidential specialty trade contractors	2,803,700	2,790,700	2,714,300	13,000	89,400	3.3%
Heavy & civil engineering	1,145,000	1,143,900	1,100,900	1,100	44,100	4.0%
Residential	3,358,400	3,354,900	3,286,500	3,500	71,900	2.2%
Residential building	949,700	946,200	922,600	3,500	27,100	2.9%
Residential specialty trade contractors	2,408,700	2,408,700	2,363,900	0	44,800	1.9%
Average Hourly Earnings						
All private industries	\$34.91	\$34.77	\$33.54	\$0.14	\$1.37	4.1%
Construction	\$38.06	\$37.99	\$36.26	\$0.07	\$1.80	5.0%
Average Weekly Hours						
All private industries	34.3	34.3	34.4	0.0	-0.1	-0.3%
Construction	39.0	38.7	38.9	0.3	0.1	0.3%
Unemployment Rate						
All private industries (SA)	4.0%	3.9%	3.7%	0.1pp	0.3pp	
Construction (NSA)	3.9%	5.2%	3.5%	-1.3pp	0.4pp	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Note: SA: Seasonally adjusted. NSA: Not seasonally adjusted

Construction Employment Growth: May 2023 v. May 2024



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics *Includes Nonresidential Building, Nonresidential STC, and Heavy and Civil Engineering **Includes Residential Building and Residential STC

Dodge Momentum Index Improved 3% in May

The **Dodge Momentum Index** (DMI), issued by Dodge Construction Network, increased 2.7% in May to 179.0 (2000=100) from the revised April reading of 174.3. Over the month, commercial planning progressed 5.5% and institutional planning slowed by 3.4%.

A total of 19 projects valued at \$100 million or more entered planning throughout the month of May. The largest commercial project included the \$500 million renovation of the former Mirage Hotel to a Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. The next two largest commercial projects to enter planning included the \$495 million Prime Data Center in Fort Worth, Texas and the \$481 million Prime Data Center in Garland, Texas. The largest institutional projects to enter planning were the \$377 million renovation project to Neyland Stadium at the University of Tennessee and the \$350 million Woodland Research and Technology Office in Woodland, California.

DODGE MOMENTUM INDEX

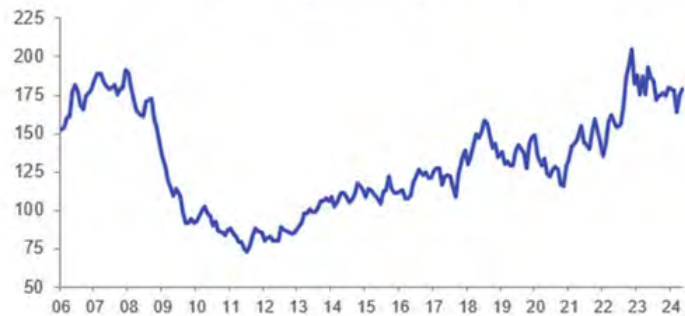
(2000=100, Seasonally Adjusted)

	May-24	Apr-24	% Change
Dodge Momentum Index	179.0	174.3	2.7%
Commercial Building	230.6	218.7	5.5%
Institutional Building	115.2	119.3	-3.4%

Source: Dodge Construction Network

DODGE MOMENTUM INDEX

(2000=100, Seasonally Adjusted)



Total Construction

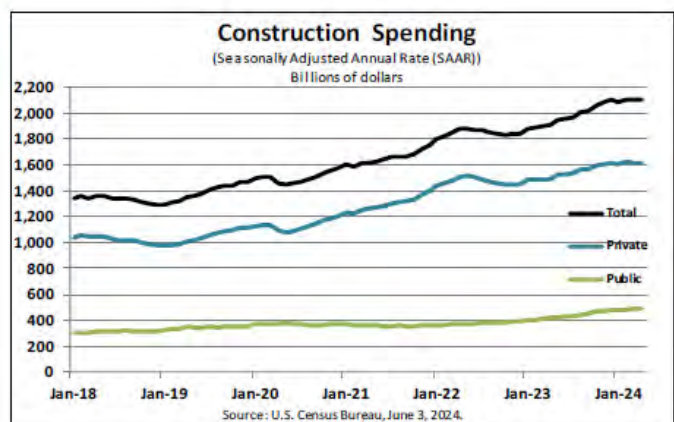
Construction spending during April 2024 was estimated at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$2,099.0 billion, 0.1 percent (± 1.0 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$2,101.5 billion. The April figure is 10.0 percent (± 1.5 percent) above the April 2023 estimate of \$1,907.8 billion. During the first four months of this year, construction spending amounted to \$635.5 billion, 10.9 percent (± 1.2 percent) above the \$573.0 billion for the same period in 2023.

Private Construction

Spending on private construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$1,611.9 billion, 0.1 percent (± 0.7 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$1,613.3 billion. Residential construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$890.4 billion in April, 0.1 percent (± 1.3 percent)* above the revised March estimate of \$889.5 billion. Nonresidential construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$721.5 billion in April, 0.3 percent (± 0.7 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$723.8 billion.

Public Construction

In April, the estimated seasonally adjusted annual rate of public construction spending was \$487.1 billion, 0.2 percent (± 2.1 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$488.2 billion. Educational construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$103.5 billion, 0.2 percent (± 2.1 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$103.6 billion. Highway construction was at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of \$149.6 billion, 0.5 percent (± 6.7 percent)* below the revised March estimate of \$150.4 billion.



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CONSTRUCTION

wants to help you with **Risk Transfer.**

The following are important coverage considerations before executing a sub-contract agreement with an upper tier.

INDEMNIFICATION REVIEW

Are you indemnifying Owner/Developers, GC's and Prime Contractors for contract provisions that are not covered by your Liability Insurance?

ADDITIONAL INSURED REQUIREMENTS

Does your Additional Insured coverage comply with contract language?

COVERAGE RESTRICTIONS & EXCLUSIONS

Do your insurance policies include coverage exclusions and conditions which may either restrict or not respond at all to certain contractual obligations you entered into, and land you in breach of contract litigation?



FEATURE

What's the New PFAs Ruling Got to Do with Me?

by Lydia Zaharia and Susanne Deegan, Marsh McLennan Agency

The Background:

On April 10, 2024, the EPA announced the final National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for five Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), and mixtures of two or more, given the suspected environmental and health impact of these chemicals. The following week, the EPA also designated two

types of PFAS, Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund), the law allowing the EPA to regulate and enforce the cleanup of hazardous substances. Although we have seen

similar water enforcement for PFAS at the state level, these rulings, along with another finalized in November of 2023, mark the first official steps towards regulation of PFAS taken by the EPA.

While the majority of concern is about the levels of PFAS in drinking water, construction companies need to be aware of how it concerns them, too.

The PROBLEMS with PFAS

HOW DOES IT GET INTO OUR BODIES?

- Cooking with nonstick pans
- Products containing PFAS
- PFAS-contaminated food and water
- PFAS in air and dust

HEALTH PROBLEMS LINKED TO PFAS

- Kidney and testicular cancer
- High blood pressure and pre-eclampsia
- Higher cholesterol
- Lower infant birth weights
- Decreased vaccine response in children

PFAS

- Short for **per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances**, chemicals used in products such as non-stick cookware, food packaging, water-resistant clothing, and stain-resistant carpeting
- Also called **'forever chemicals,'** they can take up to 1,000 years to break down in nature

WHAT CAN WE DO?

- INDIVIDUALS** – **avoid products with PFAS** and ask policymakers to limit or ban its use
- HEALTH PROFESSIONALS** – **advise patients on how to avoid PFAS** and support limits on its use
- BUSINESSES** – **phase out use of PFAS** and avoid non-essential uses
- POLICYMAKERS** – **limit or ban PFAS**

How do the new rules impact the construction industry?

Construction companies, while typically not the responsible party for products containing PFAS, do have potential risk associated with PFAS through their supply chain. These risks include:

- Inadvertent disturbance and exacerbation of existing contamination at jobsites
- Contamination of their own locations when bringing back materials from contaminated projects
- Recommending, supplying and installing products that contain PFAS
- Exposure to hazardous materials for employees and subcontractors
- Assuming liability for PFAS by contract
- Resulting claims or litigation from their participation in projects.

Additionally, designating PFOS and PFOA as hazardous substances under CERCLA could create a unique problem for contractors. Under CERCLA, "responsible parties" can be current or previous owners and operators of a facility where hazardous substances were located, but also transporters or parties that arranged

for the transportation and disposal of the hazardous substance. Contractors could have difficulty finding a facility willing to take construction and demolition waste, and be at risk for litigation and participation in the cleanup of these facilities in the future.

Many states have issued restrictions for PFAS across a wide range of products, banning the use or sale of those products within their states. Project owners and contractors should determine if products needed for a project will contain PFAS and what, if any, regulation would apply and work with suppliers to provide similar non-PFAS containing projects where possible. For remediation projects, a safety and disposal plan for working with contaminated materials should be established and followed by all parties.

PFAS can be found in the following construction materials:

- Roofing materials
- Weather proofing membranes
- Insulation
- Metal coatings
- Paints Wood stains and lacquers
- Sealants
- As additives in carpet and flooring materials to impart stain resistance
- Other fabric materials
- Caulk and other adhesives
- Cables and wires
- Solar panels
- Seismic Damping Systems
- Artificial Turf

What steps can Contractor's take to mitigate risk?

Water providers will look to contractors and consultants to design and construct systems that can meet the extremely low Maximum

Contaminant Level (MCL) of 4ppt for some PFAS compounds. While the EPA has advised the MCL's established by this ruling should be attainable, companies should carefully review the contracts for these projects with their general counsel and avoid providing warranties or assuming liability when installing new systems where possible.

Contract review and negotiation will become increasingly important as companies work to comply with these new regulations and reduce responsibility for PFAS. Contractors should review contracts for any provisions that could apply to PFAS with their counsel and push back where they are made responsible. Avoid assuming liability for materials transported or disposed of as part of operations by contract.

Conduct risk assessments of existing locations prior to starting work, especially for jobs at airports, landfills, manufacturers, brownfield or legacy contamination sites, and water-related locations. Establish an identified baseline for existing contamination and confirm the project owner retains liability of that contamination under contract. Avoid taking ownership of materials that could be contaminated through vendor confirmation that materials are PFAS free. Testing may be required for regulated PFAS and other contaminants prior to introducing a material at a contractor's location.

Introduce and enforce safe handling procedures for potential materials that could contain PFAS. Provide warning to employees, subcontractors, project owners, and end users of locations associated with PFAS materials.

Project owners, contractors and consultants should be having

conversations with their insurers or brokers about current and future risk created by these rulings. It is important that they discuss any new exclusions or sublimits in their coverage for any of these chemicals they may have at any point in their operations. If coverage is not available in the standard liability policies, coverage may be available in pollution and professional policies for all contracting types and projects.

Why does this new ruling matter? What's at stake?

While regulation and litigation to date has focused on the major manufacturers of PFAS, the precedent is changing. Companies that work with, dispose of, or have employees that are regularly exposed to PFAS are at risk for bodily injury, property damage, and cleanup claims and litigation. Contractors are no exception and should be taking steps to protect themselves from future risk.

About the Authors



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Ensuring Summer Safety on Construction Sites: Protecting Workers from the Heat

by Michael Zalle, YellowBird

Summer has arrived, and with it, construction sites across the country face a significant challenge: keeping workers safe in scorching temperatures. With soaring heat and relentless sun rays, the risk of heat-related illnesses escalates, making it imperative for construction companies to prioritize the well-being of their workforce. It's important to brush up on summer safety for construction sites—emphasizing the crucial elements of heat safety, hydration, and sun protection—including best practices and innovative solutions aimed at safeguarding construction workers in the blistering heat.

Heat Safety: Understanding the Risks

Construction sites are notorious hot spots during the summer, amplifying the risk of heat-related illnesses such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

With strenuous physical exertion and prolonged exposure to high temperatures, workers are particularly vulnerable. Recognizing the signs of heat-related illnesses is paramount for both workers and supervisors. Symptoms may include dizziness, nausea, headache, rapid heartbeat, and profuse sweating. Ignoring these warning signs can lead to severe consequences, including organ damage and even death.

Hydration: The Key to Combating Heat Stress

Proper hydration is the cornerstone of heat safety on construction sites. Encouraging workers to drink water frequently throughout the day is essential for preventing dehydration. Providing easy access to cool, potable water ensures that workers stay hydrated even during the busiest

hours. Employers should also educate workers on the importance of electrolyte replenishment, especially for those engaged in strenuous activities that result in excessive sweating. Electrolyte drinks or oral rehydration solutions can help restore the body's electrolyte balance and prevent heat-related complications.

Sun Protection: Shielding Workers from Harmful UV Rays

With hours spent under the scorching sun, construction workers increase their risk of sunburns, skin damage, and long-term health issues such as skin cancer. Implementing comprehensive sun protection measures is critical for safeguarding workers' health. This includes providing wide-brimmed hats, lightweight and breathable clothing



that covers exposed skin, and ample supplies of sunscreen with a high SPF rating. Regular application of sunscreen throughout the day, especially after sweating or swimming, is vital for adequate protection against harmful UV rays.

Best Practices for Summer Safety on Construction Sites

- Implementing a heat safety plan: Develop a comprehensive heat safety plan that outlines protocols for monitoring weather conditions, scheduling rest breaks in shaded areas, and recognizing early signs of heat-related illnesses.
- Training and education: Conduct regular training sessions to educate workers on heat safety practices, including the importance of hydration, recognizing symptoms of heat stress, and proper sun protection measures.
- Adjusting work schedules: Consider adjusting work schedules to avoid the hottest times of the day, such as scheduling tasks during the early morning or late afternoon when temperatures are relatively lower.
- Providing shaded rest areas: Install shaded rest areas equipped with cooling fans or misting systems where workers can take refuge during breaks to cool down and hydrate.
- Personalized cooling solutions: Explore innovative cooling technologies such as wearable cooling vests or neck bands that help regulate body temperature and enhance worker comfort in hot environments.

Innovative Solutions for Summer Safety

- Smart wearable technology: Embrace the use of smart wearable devices equipped with sensors that monitor workers' vital signs and environmental conditions in real-time. These devices can alert supervisors to potential heat-related risks and prompt interventions to prevent injuries.
- Heat stress prediction models: Utilize predictive analytics and heat stress

HEATSTROKE FIRST AID

SYMPTOMS MAY INCLUDE:

- DIZZINESS, FAINTING
- HEADACHE, CONFUSION
- HIGH BODY TEMPERATURE
- NO SWEATING
- FLUSHED DRY SKIN
- RAPID SHALLOW BREATHING
- RAPID STRONG PULSE
- NAUSEA, VOMIT
- WEAKNESS OR CRAMPS
- SEIZURE, UNCONSCIOUSNESS

prediction models to anticipate high-risk periods and implement proactive measures to mitigate heat-related hazards.

- Mobile hydration stations: Introduce mobile hydration stations equipped with chilled water dispensers and electrolyte drinks that can be strategically positioned around the construction site for easy access by workers.
- UV monitoring systems: Install UV monitoring systems that provide real-time data on UV radiation levels, enabling workers to adjust their sun protection measures accordingly and minimize sun exposure during peak UV hours.

Summer safety on construction sites is a collective responsibility that requires proactive measures, continuous education, and innovative solutions to protect workers from the dangers of heat-related illnesses and sun exposure. By prioritizing heat safety, hydration, and sun protection, construction companies can create a safer and healthier work environment for their employees, ensuring that they can perform their duties effectively even in the sweltering summer heat.

Ready to get your summer safety

policies into shape? YellowBird's platform is your EHS solution ready to get your policies into compliance with local, state and federal laws. Sign up on YellowBird today at app.goyellowbird.com to get started.

About the Author:

Michael Zalle is the Founder and CEO of YellowBird. He is responsible for creating, building, and launching new concepts and companies, resulting in multiple successful exits over a 25-year tech career. He has built a career through a unique balance of commercializing novel business models, operationalizing innovative technologies and platforms, rapidly scaling operations, and building market-shaping ecosystems. Michael's companies and purpose are ever focused on serving others. Whether it be satellite systems for First Responders, environmental products for flood and spill response, or time and economic support for difference-making organizations, Michael believes in "doing well while doing good."

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Bridge Safety: Past, Current, and Future

by Jason Hogan, Diversified Safety Services

On March 26, the nation was stunned when the Key Bridge in Baltimore vanished within minutes, leading to worldwide transportation chaos for months. While the details of the incident are still under investigation, let's discuss the safety principles in place and our response to this tragedy.

In any large-scale construction project, especially bridge renovations, safety is of utmost importance. Adhering to rigorous safety protocols and guidelines throughout every phase of the project is crucial. This includes:

- Thorough training for all personnel involved.
- Implementation of proper safety equipment such as harnesses, helmets, and safety ropes.
- Regular inspections of scaffolding and other temporary structures.
- Strict adherence to traffic control measures to protect both workers and motorists.
- Constant vigilance for potential hazards such as uneven surfaces, electrical wires, or unstable materials.

Additionally, clear communication among team members and regular safety meetings are essential to ensure everyone remains informed and alert. By prioritizing safety at every step, bridge renovation projects can proceed efficiently while minimizing the risk of accidents or injuries.

When I started in this industry 17 years ago, safety was important, but the emphasis and awareness on its importance have only grown each year. Large companies like Clark, Whiting-Turner, and Gilbane have a very high level of internal safety standards. While safety protocols are mandatory for all companies, larger construction firms are generally more proactive. It's encouraging to see this change. Smaller companies, with 30 people or less, often do the bare minimum due to cost constraints. Although safety procedures and equipment are worth the investment in the long run, the upfront costs and time required can be challenging for smaller companies to manage.



A recent **CBS study** found that a majority of U.S. bridges lack impact protection. While it's nearly impossible to prevent all bridge accidents, the engineering department at Johns Hopkins is currently **studying which U.S. bridges are at risk of catastrophic collapse**. Even with alarms and sensors, which while widely implemented, but not always taken seriously, preventing a 100% collapse at the point of impact is almost impossible. Some situations may be unavoidable despite our best efforts.

The increasing size of cargo ships also heightens the likelihood of catastrophic accidents. Have any safety changes been made to cargo ships since the Baltimore Key Bridge accident? I certainly hope we've learned something. As someone who traveled across the Key Bridge about three times a week, the collapse hit me hard.

When I first learned about the accident, I was incensed that the ship was allowed to leave its original port, let alone Baltimore, in its condition. It's clear that for some companies, safety is not a priority over profit. Why are we ignoring alarms, precautions, and other safeguards in place?

Fortunately, the companies I work with maintain stringent safety standards, have zero tolerance for errors, and take safety very seriously. However, it's easy to become complacent when everything seems to be going well. These tragedies serve as a wake-up call for all of us to stay alert, double-check, and not take safety lightly.

In my daily work, whether ensuring the safety of worksites at government or non-government facilities or conducting bridge inspections, I've learned that the small things often make a big difference. If everyone could take 10 minutes one day a week to have a quick safety meeting about the hazards they face on their job sites, acknowledging and being accountable for them, it would significantly reduce the frequency of accidents. Deal?

About the Author

Jason Hogan is the government operations manager for **Diversified Safety Services**, overseeing roughly 30 people who work in various government facilities in the northern Virginia, DC Maryland area.



Day Zero Training: A Safety Program to Mitigate Risk Among New Hires

by Manny Rodriguez, Kent Companies



On the first day a new hire sets foot on a construction site, they enter a high-risk group. Over 60% of job site injuries are sustained by those with less than one year of tenure (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

The frequency of injuries and incidents among new hires is a risk moment that you can't ignore. If these individuals are more susceptible to incidents on day one, your safety plan needs to start before they set foot on site.

Day Zero is a strategic initiative that builds safety awareness, culture and buy-in beyond orientation. In the traditional sense, everyone expects orientation on the first day of a new job. This typically includes paperwork, introductions and perhaps a brief video. However, there is a big difference between orientation processes and an onboarding experience.

Beyond the paperwork, safety onboarding includes education, culture and personal connections that equip new hires to step confidently onto job sites on day one. Here are three important components of a meaningful *Day Zero* experience.

Safety Orientation

Safety orientation should be a structured process that starts with an introduction to local safety team members. The safety team should give all new hires their contact information. Beyond serving as a safety resource, they have an opportunity to begin building personal relationships with new team members.

Safety orientation should include the mission, values and culture of the organization. Emphasizing safety as the ultimate priority and the first message of the day establishes a strong foundation for all other processes. Safety orientation must also include your organization's safety policies and procedures, as well as the tools, methods and hazards related to their role.

Stop Work Authority

Stop Work Authority empowers everyone to halt work if they perceive any aspect of a task isn't safe. This message is critical to the *Day Zero* experience. New hires must understand that their leaders and peers want them to speak up, ask questions and seek guidance before taking on a task they are

unsure of. Help new hires understand that Stop Work Authority comes in many forms. It can be as simple as pausing 30 seconds to clarify a task and outline hazards before the activity begins.

Expanding the Experience

Beyond orientation, *Day Zero* training should be immersive. Consider how your organization can expand the experience beyond a traditional classroom setting. Your *Day Zero* may include tool training and instruction, particularly for those who are new to construction or to your specialty. Consider bringing back recent retirees to teach on a part-time basis. These tenured experts have lifelong experience in the tools of the trade and how your team delivers work. They value the opportunity to give back by sharing their experience with others.

Once new hires are assigned to a specific site and crew, don't lose sight of them. Schedule check-ins at 30, 60 and 90 days to ensure they feel competent in their role and confident in safe operations.

Finally, the most impactful safety programs make safety personal. That's exactly what *Day Zero* should accomplish with your new hires. What's your why? What motivates you to work safely, and who do you want to return home to each night? Encourage your new team members to share the same. *Day Zero* should be an experience that resonates at home and on the job.

About the Author:



Manny Rodriguez is the National Safety Director for Kent Companies. With 20+ years of construction safety experience, he oversees a national safety team of two

dozen professionals across seven regional offices.

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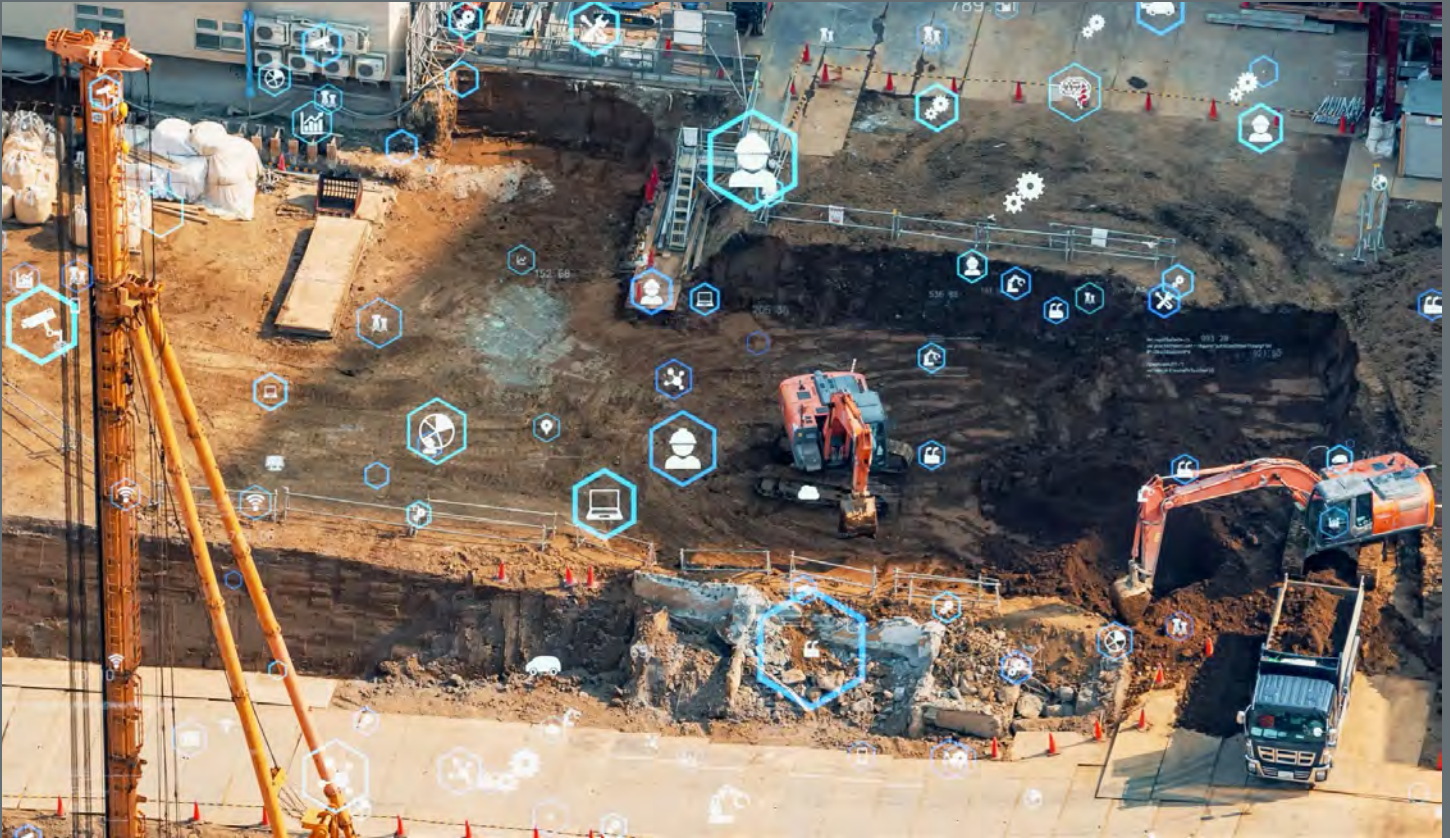
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FEATURE

AI Construction Safety in a Changing World: Adapt and Innovate

by Dan Doyon, Maxim Consulting Group



The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into various aspects of the construction process is causing a remarkable transformation in the construction industry. This innovation has had a substantial impact on construction safety, reducing potential hazards and improving the well-being of workers. The objective of this article is to investigate the potential of AI in the construction industry and to offer a comprehensive guide to innovation and adaptation in this field.

My clients frequently ask me as to whether artificial intelligence will eliminate construction employment. My response is consistent: AI will not eliminate employment; rather, it will provide companies with the opportunity to concentrate on root causes, preventive measures, and other factors

that significantly impact profitability. Construction safety professionals are optimistic about the potential changes to their professions as a result of the advancement of technology.

Organizational alignment and a propensity to take risks that could enhance operations are critical to the future of AI in construction safety. Business leaders must comprehend the potential of the same technology that is employed to identify hazards to assist in the prediction of project timelines and the assessment of building quality in the future. Organizational alignment and a propensity to take risks that could enhance operations are critical to the future of AI in construction safety. Business leaders must comprehend the potential of the same technology that is employed to identify hazards to assist in

the prediction of project timelines and the assessment of building quality in the future.

The Need for AI in Construction Safety

Construction sites are inherently hazardous environments, with a high incidence of accidents and fatalities. Falls are the most common cause of private sector fatalities in the construction industry, followed by electrocution, struck by an object, and caught-in/between, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This excludes highway collisions. The incorporation of AI in construction safety is a proactive measure that aims to enhance the health and safety of construction workers, thereby addressing these issues.

AI in Construction Safety: Applications and Innovations

Real-time Safety Monitoring

In real-time, AI-powered construction safety software can detect potential hazards and risks by perpetually monitoring construction sites. This technology facilitates the early identification of safety concerns, thereby enabling the immediate intervention and prevention of catastrophes.

Constructing artificial intelligence Real-time Safety Monitoring is the process of continuously monitoring construction sites using AI technologies to identify potential hazards and risks in real time. This innovative method capitalizes on AI's capabilities to analyze vast quantities of data, thereby facilitating proactive measures to prevent catastrophes and guarantee the safety of employees.

Here is a detailed breakdown of how AI construction Real-time Safety Monitoring works:

Collection of Data: Artificial intelligence systems acquire real-time data from a variety of sources, including environmental sensors, wearable devices, and video cameras. This information may encompass images, videos, audio, and other pertinent details regarding the construction site.

- **IoT Sensors and Devices:** These devices gather real-time data from construction sites, such as environmental conditions, worker activity, and equipment usage.
- **Robotics and drones:** These devices are capable of capturing high-resolution images and videos, which enable the monitoring of progress and the investigation of sites in detail.
- **Software Integration:** AI systems are designed to work in conjunction with existing construction management software, such as BIM and ERP systems, to extract data from a variety of sources and generate comprehensive reports.

Real-time Analysis: Artificial intelligence algorithms analyze the data that has been collected in real-time, identifying potential safety hazards and patterns. This analysis may encompass anomaly detection, motion monitoring, and object recognition. For instance, AI has the capacity to identify whether a worker is not donning the appropriate personal protective equipment

(PPE) or if a piece of machinery is being operated incorrectly.

- **Machine Learning Algorithms:** These algorithms analyze extensive datasets to detect anomalies, trends, and patterns. They are capable of anticipating prospective complications, including equipment malfunctions or project delays.
- **Natural Language Processing (NLP):** NLP is a technique that facilitates the comprehension and processing of textual data, including site reports, communications, and documentation, thereby converting it into structured data.

Alert and Notification: The AI system has the capability to promptly notify the appropriate personnel, including safety officers or site administrators, in the event that it identifies a potential safety hazard. This real-time notification enables the immediate implementation of measures to reduce the danger and prevent accidents.

Management and Response to Incidents

- **Incident Reporting System:** Establish an incident reporting system that is tailored to AI in order to record any AI-related accidents or issues.
- **Protocols for Emergencies:** Teach and develop employees on emergency response protocols that are specifically intended to address incidents related to artificial intelligence.

Predictive Analytics: AI can also analyze historical data from previous construction projects to identify patterns and trends related to accidents and near-miss incidents: predictive analytics. This predictive capability enables construction companies to implement safety measures that are specifically designed to reduce the probability of accidents.

Automated Safety Reporting: Information may be gleaned from worker comments, near-miss reports, and safety incident reports using AI-powered construction management software. By addressing recurrent safety issues and finding patterns, this data analysis can assist construction companies in fostering a culture of safety.

- **Template-Based Reporting:** AI systems create standardized and consistent reports by utilizing pre-defined templates.

- **Customizable Dashboards:** Providing real-time insights, interactive dashboards let stakeholders alter views according to their own requirements and preferences.
- **Automated Alerts and messages:** When significant problems, deadlines, or abnormalities in the data are found, the system has the ability to automatically send alerts and messages.
- **Presentation and Visualization**
 - ♦ **Graphical Representation:** Complex information is simpler to understand when data is presented in visually appealing ways like charts, graphs, and 3D models.
 - ♦ **Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR):** These technologies provide immersive experiences for planning and visualizing the next steps of a project.
- **Lowering Expenses**
 - ♦ **Resource Optimization:** AI aids in resource optimization and lowers project costs by seeing inefficiencies and possible problems early on.
 - ♦ **Preventive Maintenance:** Equipment downtime and repair expenses are decreased by predictive maintenance scheduling.

Behaviorally-based Workplace Safety Monitoring: By identifying unsafe behaviors, AI-powered construction safety solutions enable construction businesses to provide focused safety training. This strategy reduces possible hazards and fosters a culture of safety.

Continuous Improvement: The application of AI to construction safety is a quickly developing topic. Maintaining current with the most recent advancements, periodically assessing and revising AI safety procedures, and adjusting to new technology and best practices are all components of continuous improvement.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration in construction safety offers a holistic approach to safety management in addition to improving real-time monitoring. With the goal of enhancing the health and safety of construction workers, it provides behaviorally-based workplace safety monitoring, automated safety reporting, and predictive analytics. In addition to saving lives, this proactive approach to

safety increases the productivity and efficiency of building projects.

Predictive Analytics for Safety

Artificial Intelligence has the capability to examine past building project data and detect trends and patterns linked to mishaps and near-miss situations. Construction organizations can lower the risk of accidents by implementing targeted safety measures made possible by this predictive capabilities.

AI building The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to continually monitor building sites and identify potential dangers and hazards in real-time is known as "real-time safety monitoring." This creative strategy makes use of AI's enormous data analysis capabilities to enable preemptive steps that guarantee worker safety and avert mishaps.

AI is also capable of analyzing past data from completed construction projects to find trends and patterns pertaining to near-miss occurrences and accidents. Construction organizations can lower the risk of accidents by implementing targeted safety measures made possible by this predictive capabilities.

Automated Safety Reporting

Worker comments, near-miss reports, and safety event reports can all provide valuable insights for the construction management software. By identifying trends and resolving recurrent safety concerns, this data analysis can assist construction businesses in fostering a safety culture.

Behavioral-based Workplace Safety Monitoring Solutions

Construction sites are generally known for being dangerous and dynamic places to work. Construction organizations may now adopt targeted safety training thanks to AI-powered construction safety solutions that can identify unsafe activities. This strategy reduces possible hazards and fosters a culture of safety.

AI-driven Risk Management

Moreover, pre-construction risk management is being improved with AI. By presenting a comprehensive picture of the project's progress, detecting potential dangers, and facilitating prompt intervention, this creative method seeks to increase project efficiency and safety.

Adapting to AI in Construction Safety: A Guide

Understanding the Technology

Comprehending AI and its applications is essential to effectively implementing it in construction safety. This includes being familiar with data analysis tools, machine learning algorithms, and AI systems.

Training and Education

It is crucial to invest in manager and worker education and training. This comprises instruction in the use of AI-driven safety systems, data interpretation, and the application of AI-driven safety measures.

Collaboration with AI Experts

In order for construction companies to properly implement artificial intelligence into their safety protocols, they must collaborate with AI experts. This cooperation may involve providing constant help, continuing consultation, and the development of safety solutions that are powered by artificial intelligence.

- **Involve Stakeholders:** To obtain varied viewpoints and improve safety procedures, regularly include stakeholders in discussions concerning AI implementations.
- **Partnerships with Subject Matter Experts:** Collaboration with consulting industry leaders and artificial intelligence safety specialists is the greatest way to stay up to date on the latest safety technology and best practices.

Implementation of AI Solutions

AI in construction safety demands a well-planned approach that takes organizational, technological, and human elements into account. Construction organizations may significantly improve their safety standards, lower risks, and improve worker outcomes by carefully developing and applying AI.

- **Pilot Testing:** To assess the effect of AI solutions on safety, start with pilot projects that test them in controlled settings.
- **Gradual Roll-out:** Apply effective AI solutions over time to additional business domains while keeping a close eye on performance and resolving any problems that may emerge.

Implementing AI Safety Protocols

The implementation of AI safety protocols involves integrating AI-powered safety systems into the construction process. This includes setting up the necessary hardware and software, establishing data collection and analysis protocols, and integrating AI insights into safety measures.

Continuous Improvement

Construction safety and AI are quickly developing fields. Maintaining current with the most recent advancements, periodically assessing and revising AI safety procedures, and adjusting to new technology and best practices are all components of continuous improvement.

Conclusion

An important step forward for the construction industry is the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI) in safety measures. This technology offers innovative approaches to enhance worker safety and minimize hazards. It is possible for construction organizations to successfully transition into this new era of construction safety if they have a thorough understanding of the technology, if they make investments in training and education, if they collaborate with AI experts, if they implement AI safety measures, and if they continue to improve. This proactive approach not only ensures the health and safety of construction workers, but it also helps to cultivate a culture of innovation and safety within the overall construction industry.

About the Author

Dan Doyon is an independent consultant based in Dallas, Texas, and Director at Maxim Consulting Group (www.maximconsulting.com). He works with construction-related companies to solve complex business challenges to increase revenue and profitability. With his guidance, companies have driven over \$160 billion in top-line sales growth and hundreds of millions in operational savings through improved processes. Dan specializes in business transformation and turnarounds, has published research papers and trade articles, and is an acknowledged industry speaker. Dan received his MBA from Georgetown University. He can be reached at dan.doyon@maximconsulting.com.



Cultivating Better Relationships for Improved Safety

by Scott Risch, Rosendin



There are many conversations around how to improve safety culture within the construction industry, but to move the needle, it's important to stop bifurcating safety from a company's larger culture because safety is an integral part of everything we do and should be treated as such.

During my more than 25 years in the industry, I've found that one of the most effective ways to improve safety within an organization is to build strong relationships and invest in them frequently.

Safety is not the other person's job. A safe project takes ownership and a commitment to not just work together but to look out for each other. We all need to be open to being reminded that we forgot to put on our gloves or that there is a better, safer way to complete the task.

When this occurs, we need to be thankful. Someone cared enough about you, your family, and your community to pause their work to talk to you about your safety. That is awesome. If you are not there, that's where we all need to get.

Using Relationships to Support Safety Initiatives

Positive relationships allow teams to build trust and offer peer-to-peer support and accountability without someone becoming defensive. One way we do this at Rosendin is to build relationships by breaking bread together – enjoying food and drinks while discussing common interests and life outside of work.

When a team has this foundation of trust and respect, there's space for everyone to learn and grow. It creates



an environment of collaboration and allows people to feel comfortable sharing candidly what they need to perform their job safely and effectively. I've seen firsthand how prioritizing relationships can transform a job site from hostile and contentious to positive and joyful. A team that enjoys coming to work and working together will always be safer, more productive, and provide the best product for their clients.

This focus on relationships should also extend to partners, vendors, and clients. Ensuring everyone on a job site – not just our internal teams – feels aligned and supportive of one another only improves safety for all involved.

How a Focus on Safety Improves Business

Creating a positive work environment through strong relationships improves employee morale and is good for business. Not only are satisfied employees more likely to engage in safe job site behaviors, but they're also generally more efficient and stay with their companies longer – allowing their safety experience and general work expertise to be built upon and shared while reducing costly turnover rates.

In my experience, when employees are happy, they're more engaged and likely to share great ideas—for safety protocols or other ways to improve the company's workflow. Creating a safe space for these ideas helps unlock employees' greatest potential. The best part is that developing positive team relationships is low-cost—all it requires is time and effort.

Communicating the Importance of Safety

Communicating the importance of safety doesn't end with training. While training is critical for sharing the 'why' behind safety procedures, this communication works best when we continue it on the job in a clear, compassionate, and solution-oriented way. As leaders, we can also communicate through our actions by leading by example and holding ourselves to the same standards we expect from everyone else. This is often one of the most powerful ways to communicate the importance of safety and inspire positive change.

Leaders should also remember that communication includes listening, and effective communication goes both ways. Create opportunities where

employees can share problems, voice their concerns, and provide feedback. Additionally, when employees share their thoughts and experiences, we as leaders are responsible for acting, validating, and valuing their input.

The best way to do this is to follow up with them. Let them know the outcome of their contribution by telling them that the hazard has been corrected and that the material is being moved closer to the work area. Discuss with them why it can't be done by talking through the situation. They will appreciate the respect you showed them and the value you placed on the relationship. They will know through your actions that they are an integral part of the solution and take more ownership.

Celebrate the Efforts, Not the Results

Celebrating safety milestones is an exciting and rewarding way to improve team morale and bring positive attention to the value of safety. In construction, we often celebrate a lack of injuries or the number of safe hours, but I recommend rewarding the recipe – not the result. This focuses on the efforts that helped the team achieve the desired result, not just the result itself. At Rosendin, some of the milestones we plan to start celebrating include the number of training hours, the number of safety inspections, and the number of engagements.

About the Author



D. Scott Risch is the VP of Environment, Health, and Safety at **Rosendin**. He has over 25 years of experience in the construction industry, building cross-

functional, multi-site teams dedicated to keeping workers safe.



FEATURE

Empowering Construction Teams: Effective Ways to Communicate About New Technology

by Patrick Hogan, handle.com



Safety in construction extends beyond physical hazards. With the increasing reliance on digital tools and technology, safeguarding a company's data is critical. As cyber threats and poor digital security can lead to data breaches and operational disruptions, protecting digital assets has become as essential as ensuring physical safety on the job site.

Digital tools can be vulnerable to cyber attacks and data loss if not adequately secured. Understanding and addressing these vulnerabilities is essential for protecting sensitive information and maintaining efficiency and client trust.

It's important to note that many subcontractor companies do not have dedicated cybersecurity teams. Often, a single IT person or manager is responsible for ensuring data safety and systems security.

This article offers insights into best practices for safeguarding digital tools and securing data in an increasingly digital construction world. Let's look at three key areas: assessing software security, implementing best practices, and educating employees.

Assessing Software Security Measures

Specific tasks in construction operations require particular security measures. While most software providers are familiar with what's needed, verifying these features yourself is essential. Conducting regular checks and ensuring proper configuration is critical as you use various software products in your projects.

Scenario 1: Your subcontracting firm recently implemented new project management software to improve task coordination on-site. During setup, you realized it required personal information and emails for all users, raising concerns about data security. Configuring permissions to ensure only authorized personnel like project managers and site supervisors have access to specific project data is critical.

Action: Set up strong passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and configure user permissions so only the right people can access specific data.

Verification: Review the vendor's security documentation, perform a security audit to ensure permissions

are correctly set up, and test with a few users to confirm access controls.

Scenario 2: Your firm uses cloud storage for project documents, which include sensitive information such as contracts, receipts of **construction online payments**, invoices, blueprints, legal documents, and financials. Improper sharing of these documents through links could expose sensitive data to unauthorized parties.

Action: Ensure the cloud provider uses data encryption and access controls. Train all staff to use secure file-sharing methods, such as password-protected links and setting expiration dates on shared files.

Verification: Verify the cloud provider's security certifications, review access logs monthly to monitor who views files, and conduct a staff training session on secure sharing practices.

Implementing Best Practices for Software Security

Regular software updates are fundamental, but establishing a routine for updates and security audits is crucial for addressing vulnerabilities. Remember to create a checklist for software security measures and review it regularly to ensure comprehensive coverage.

Scenario 1: Some firms issue devices to employees, while others might only issue devices to specific employees who need secure communication. In hybrid setups or during work travel, employees such as site engineers and construction managers often need to access the internet outside the well-configured office network, such as public Wi-Fi.

Action: Provide employees with VPN software, train them on its use, and

enforce strong password policies with two-factor authentication on all work-related accounts.

Verification: Ensure VPN software is installed and running on all devices, check the strength of passwords periodically, and verify that two-factor authentication is enabled and functioning.

Scenario 2: Your firm relies heavily on email communication for coordination and updates among project managers, site supervisors, and subcontractors. However, phishing attacks have become more common, posing significant risks.

Action: Implement spam filters and email encryption and train employees to recognize and avoid phishing attempts.

Verification: Regularly review and update spam filter settings, conduct periodic phishing simulations, and monitor email encryption status.

Educating Employees on Digital Security Awareness

Training employees on digital security is crucial for keeping your firm's data and operations safe. Construction workers, site managers, and project coordinators often handle sensitive information, making them targets for cyber attacks. Ensuring that all

employees understand potential threats and know how to respond can significantly reduce the risk of data breaches.

Here are five key areas where training is essential:

- **Password Security:** Teach employees to create strong, unique passwords using letters, numbers, and special characters.
- **Secure File-Sharing:** Train staff to use secure file-sharing methods such as password-protected links and setting expiration dates on shared files. Connecting to Networks: Ensure employees use VPN software to secure internet connections when accessing networks outside the office.
- **Using Personal Emails for Work:** To prevent data breaches, enforce a policy requiring work emails to be sent from company accounts only.
- **Recognizing Phishing Attempts:** Educate employees to identify phishing emails, which often contain unexpected requests for sensitive information or unfamiliar links.

By focusing on these critical areas, subcontractors can significantly enhance their digital security posture, protecting their operations and sensitive

data. These straightforward steps will help ensure that digital tools and software are used safely and securely in the modern construction landscape.

However, digital security is an ongoing process that requires continuous vigilance and adaptation to evolving threats. Regularly reviewing and updating security measures, staying informed about the latest cybersecurity trends, and fostering a culture of security awareness among employees will help subcontractors stay ahead of potential risks.

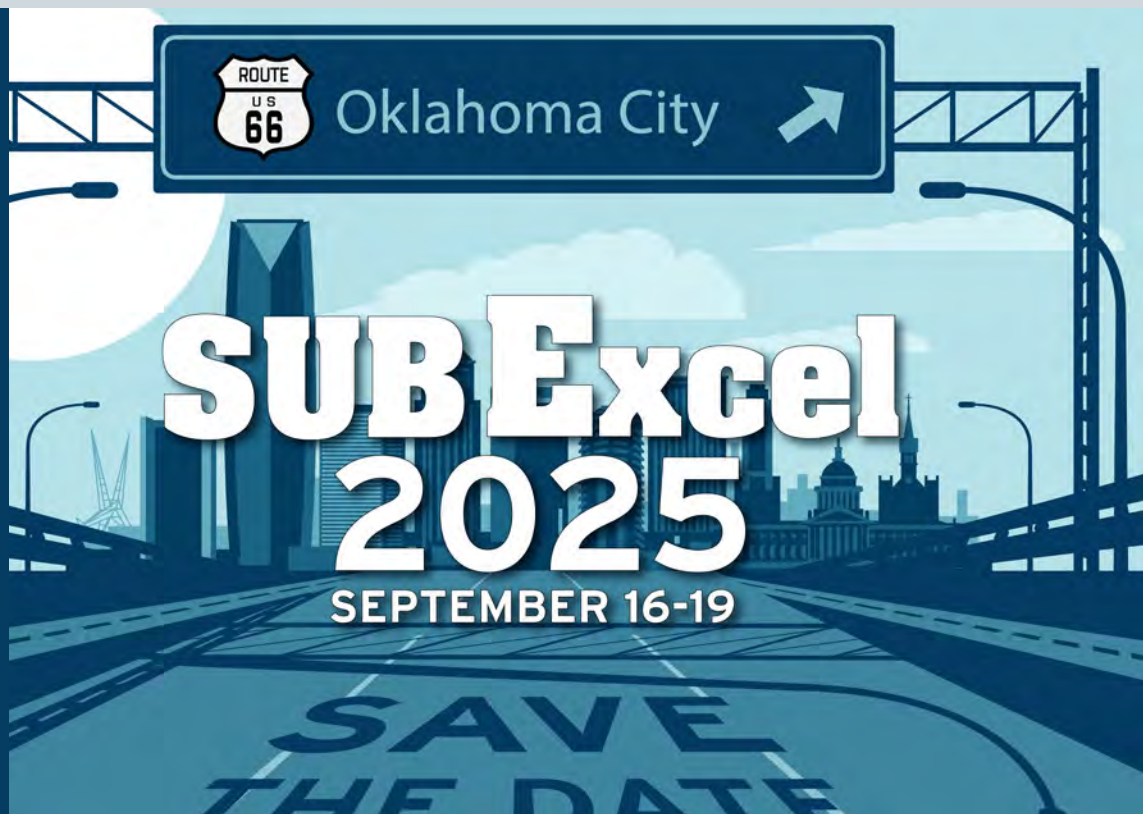
By prioritizing digital safety, modern contractors can safeguard their projects, maintain client trust, and ensure the smooth operation of their businesses.

About the Author:



*Patrick Hogan is the CEO of **handle.com**, where they build software that powers the largest credit teams in construction.*

Handle is the new approach to construction payments and lien management, optimizing workflows to increase all credit and finance efficiency.



A promotional banner for the 'SUB Excel 2025' event. The background is a stylized illustration of a highway leading towards a city skyline under a blue sky. At the top, a blue highway sign features the 'ROUTE 66' shield and the text 'Oklahoma City' with a right-pointing arrow. The main text 'SUB Excel 2025' is in large, bold, white letters with a slight shadow. Below it, the dates 'SEPTEMBER 16-19' are written in a smaller white font. At the bottom, the phrase 'SAVE THE DATE' is written in large, bold, white letters on the road surface.



FEATURE

Mental Health in the Workplace

by SESCO Management Consultants

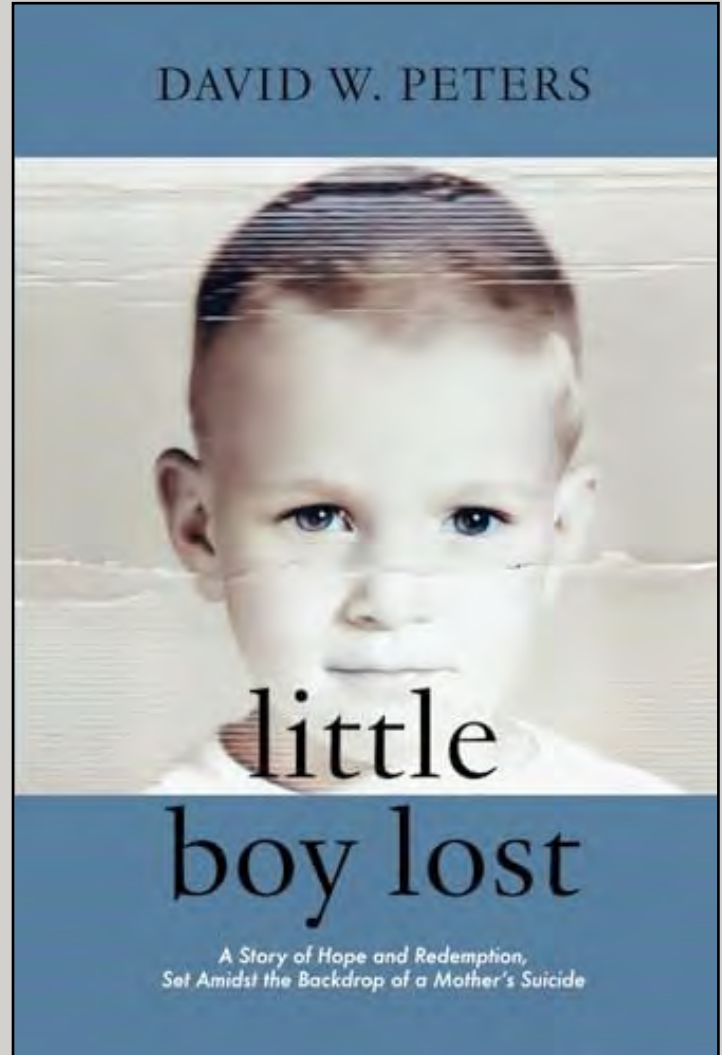


In the past three years our practice has received a significant increase from clients concerning mental health in the workplace. We will not delve into the many reasons for this unfortunate increase, but we all know family, friends and co-workers who have suffered or are suffering mental health challenges.

From an employer's standpoint, managing mental health within the workplace is rather complicated both from an employment law compliance standpoint as well as balancing productivity versus showing patience and concern. In the past years, we have assisted clients with employees who engaged in workplace violence, threats of suicide, actual suicide, mental breakdowns, shutting down completely with co-workers, customers and in the workplace and other challenges. These are all most difficult to address but we believe one of the most important recommendations we can make is not to avoid what appears to be a mental health issue and hope it goes away.

We have found in our practice that there are many, many resources available to those experiencing challenges including suicide. What we feel may be lacking in terms of professional services are those friends, family members and co-workers who lost someone to suicide. It is obviously very devastating for those individuals as well. Those individuals need assistance as much or more as anybody experiencing the actual mental health challenges.

For those who have been touched by mental health and suicide, we strongly Recommend: [Little Boy Lost: A Story of Hope and Redemption, Set Amidst the Backdrop of a Mother's Suicide](#)



Little Boy Lost is the true story of one boy's heartache and hope while coming of age in small-town Tennessee in the 1970s. David Peters thinks that having a mother who spends months at a time in psychiatric hospitals is normal. Then on St. Patrick's Day 1974, his world shatters when she commits suicide. The story continues while he is left struggling to make sense of his mother's death and other significant family challenges. In the end, David discovers that even in life's darkest moments, if you look hard enough for the light, eventually the sun will rise again. He hopes by sharing his story that readers will gain an understanding of how to find hope and healing after family trauma from mental illness and suicide. *Little Boy Lost* has been a bestseller three times and has a 4.8 rating on Amazon. It has only been on the market since November 7, 2023. We urge for your reading or as a gift for a friend, family member or co-worker to order this book on [Amazon](#). It may be the help that is much needed.

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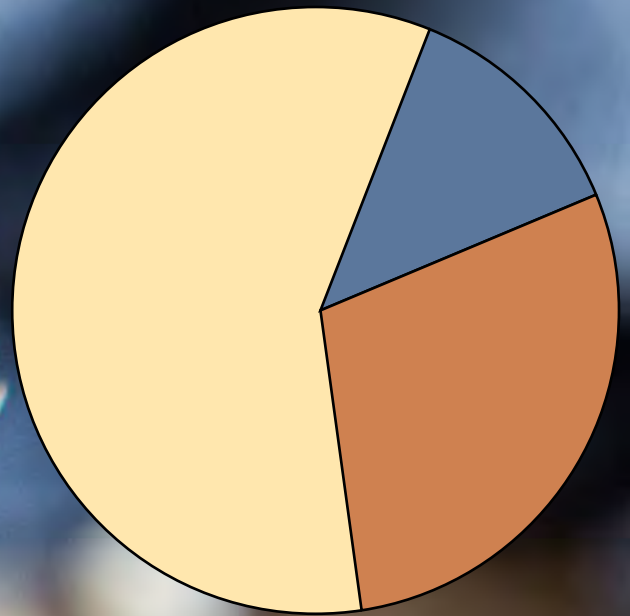


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