

PREVENT FRACTURES Part 3

Most workers who are critically injured have either fallen or been hit by a piece of equipment or material. In most cases, falling or being hit by something leads to that unmistakable sound of cracking bone—indicating a fracture to an arm, leg, head, hip, or back.

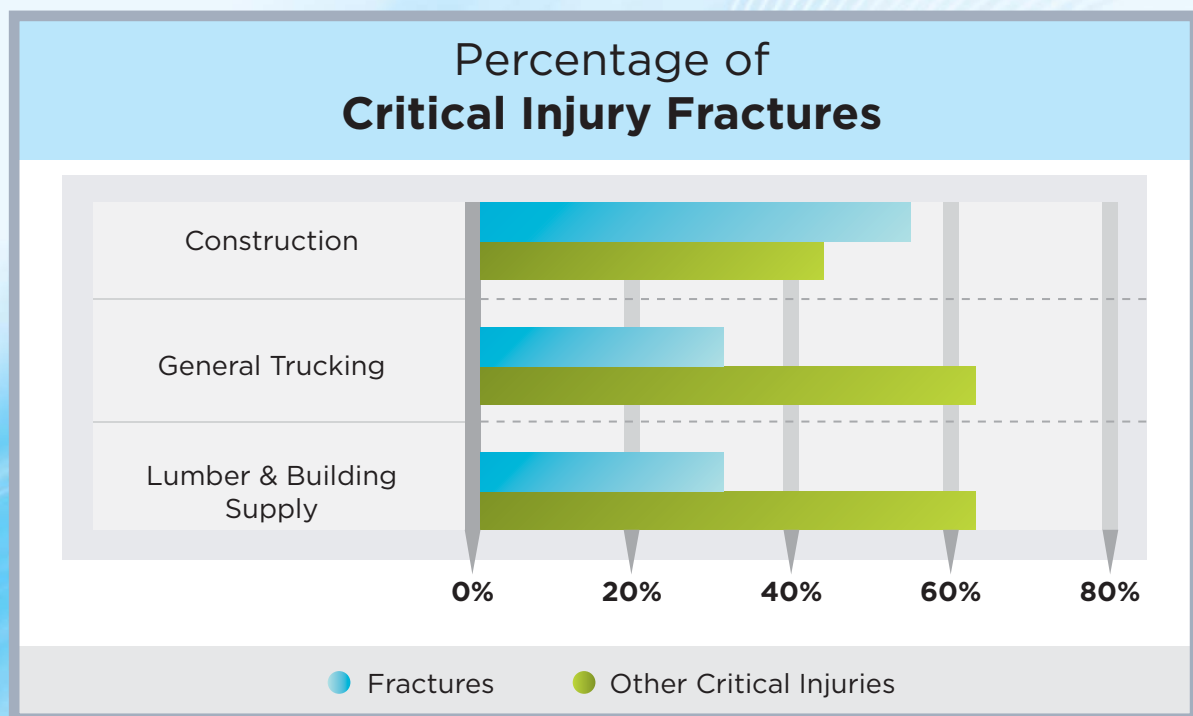
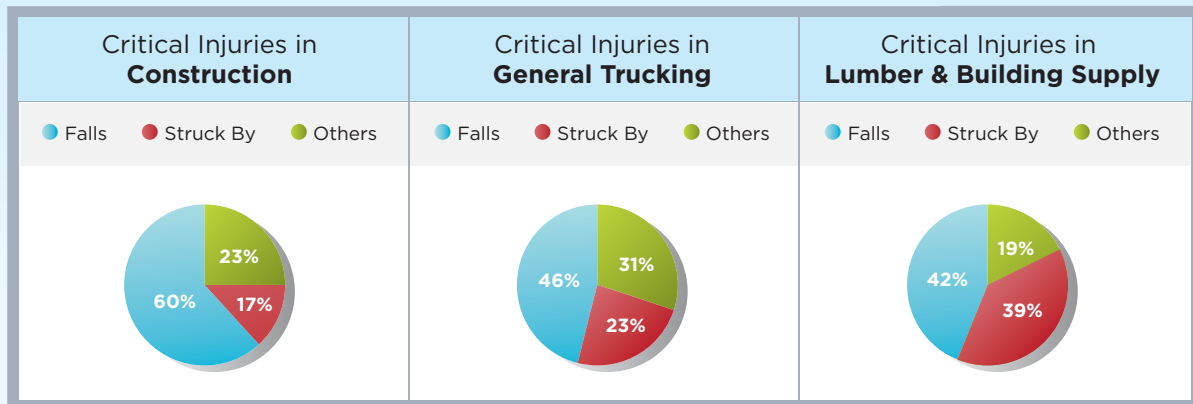
According to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), most fractures in IHSA’s industries occur in the construction, general trucking, and lumber and building-supply rate groups. (See the breakdown in the charts below.)

Not only are broken bones a leading type of injury, but they are also one of the most expensive kinds of workplace insurance claims.

In the last two issues of *Health and Safety Magazine*, we described ways for employers of construction workers, truck drivers, and loading-dock workers, as well as the workers themselves, to reduce the risk of fractures.

In this issue, we’re looking at how to prevent fractures among workers in lumber yards and building-supply yards.

This is the last article in our three-part series on preventing fractures in the construction, trucking, and building-supply industries. For copies of all three articles, visit www.ihsa.ca.



Preventing fractures in lumber and building-supply yards

To prevent fractures, you need to keep your workers from falling and from getting hit by vehicles or material. These types of injuries can be fatal, but when workers survive them, they almost always have a broken bone. To help prevent this, review the safety tips below with your workers.

Forklifts

A forklift is the most dangerous piece of equipment in a lumber yard, according to the National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association (NLBMDA) in the United States. Workers are often hit by a forklift or by the material a forklift is carrying.

That's why driver training and certification are



so important. Training, combined with seatbelts, regular maintenance, and daily inspections, will help prevent fractures caused by forklift accidents.

Housekeeping

Poor housekeeping can cause a worker to slip, trip, or fall, and that can lead to a fracture. The NLBMDA suggests that you set aside time to clean up around the building and get rid of obvious hazards at least once a week. They also recommend that you make one worker in each department responsible for housekeeping. When it's someone's job to keep the work area clean, it's more likely to be done consistently. Rotate workers through this position each month.

Load building

One of the biggest hazards of load building occurs when a worker sees a load start to shift. Often, he or she jumps up to try to hold it in place. But that's like trying to hold up a building that's falling down—it can't be done.

Make load building safer by

- keeping equipment in good condition through regular maintenance
- training your workers on forklifts and banding
- establishing banding stations
- promoting proper lifting techniques.

Raised banding stations with equipment sheds make it easier for workers to band the loads. These protect the workers' backs because they don't have to bend over. They also provide a central place for storing clips, snips, gloves, wrapping material, and spacers.

Above all, if a load does start to fall, tell your workers to get out of the way immediately. They should NOT try to hold the material up.

Material stacking

When you are stacking material,

- Make sure the pallets are not broken.
- Keep stacks away from busy pathways.
- Be sure that material on overhead racks is secure.
- Use nets on high racks.

Inspect stacked material regularly to make sure it is secure. You never know if something may have been moved or knocked over and may have caused the stack to become unstable.

Use this information to give a 5-minute safety talk to your workers.
For more information on preventing falls and struck-by injuries, visit www.ihsa.ca