

Statement of Need

In order to properly assess North Florida's need for OSHA training within the construction industry and construction-related businesses such as product suppliers; it is prudent to view the state within the context of national trends. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), of 4,214,200 non-fatal cases (injury vs. illness), 94.2 percent (3,971,700) were *injury-related*. Illnesses only accounted for 5.8 percent (242,500).

Construction injury rates are high: The BLS estimates that 1,200 American construction workers die in falls on the job each year. While the construction industry only employs about seven percent of the nation's workforce, construction sites accounted for 21 percent of workplace deaths. The Census of Fatal Occupations Injury Summary revealed that private construction industry accounts for more fatal work injuries than any other sector—about one out of every five.

A University of Florida study found that construction deaths and injuries could have been prevented if existing OSHA safety rules were followed. 37 Florida companies were studied (a subset of a national database). Safety rules were rarely followed, and management rarely provided safety training.

- 92 percent offered no safety training
- 30 percent had no general safety plan
- 54 percent did not provide orientation for new workers

Over 30,000 construction occupational injuries (mostly falls, transportation incidents and exposure to harmful substances and environments) were recorded by Florida's Department of Financial Services in 2005.

Even though residential construction has slowed in much of the country, Florida's residential construction industrial is comparatively strong. In turn, demand has increased pressure among contractors to produce at a rapid pace. By some estimates, the construction of single-family homes is near the level of the post World War II housing boom. 2006 BLS estimates list Florida's construction sector employment exceeding 510,000.

In Florida, construction is as big as it is dangerous. According to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the Florida masonry industry represents \$2.1 billion in construction activity; 528 million concrete block produced and installed in the state; 195 million brick installed in the state; and over 8,800 masons and tenders are employed in the state. Florida has the 2nd highest number of working masons in the country, only tailing the state of New York. It is projected by the year 2012; Florida will lead the county in working masons. Masons are listed on the Statewide Demand Occupational List for 2007 – 2008 compiled by the State of Florida – Agency for Work Innovation (AWI) – Labor Market Information.

Economic Impact – Nationally, the total direct and indirect costs associated with workplace injuries are estimated to be \$155.5 billion—nearly 3 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP). **Employer and employee direct costs** included medical expenses for: hospitals, physicians, medications, and health administration costs. **Employer and employee indirect costs** included: loss of wages, cost of fringe benefits, employer retraining, and workplace disruption costs. Workers' Compensation covers roughly 27% of all these costs; **taxpayers paid approximately 18%** through contributions to Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid. Workers' Compensation claims continue to be cited as critical factor in the success or failure of small businesses in the state of Florida.