Why are construction workers at risk?

- The construction industry has one of the highest injury rates compared to other industries.¹
- Opioids are often prescribed to treat the pain caused by these injuries.
- Long-term opioid use can make people more sensitive to pain and decrease the opioid’s pain-reducing effects.

Injured construction workers often...

- Cannot continue to work while injured.
- Suffer a loss in income. Even if an injured worker receives workers’ compensation, it is often not enough to make up for lost pay.*
- Experience anxiety, stress, and depression, which can add to the pain.

Overdose deaths are on the rise.

- In 2016 alone, more than 63,000 people died in the U.S. from an overdose — over 42,000 of which involved an opioid, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- One study showed that more than half of those who died from an overdose had suffered at least one job-related injury.³
- Overall, overdose deaths that occurred on the job increased by 30% between 2015 and 2016.⁴
- In Ohio, for example, construction workers were 7 times more likely than other workers to die from an opioid overdose between 2010 and 2016.⁵

Protect Yourself!

1. **Prevent Injuries**

   Work shouldn’t hurt — your employer must provide a safe workplace to prevent an injury from occurring. A commitment to safety reduces the risk for injury and need for pain medication. Follow safe work practices.

2. **Talk to a Doctor**

   Opioids are addictive and can have side effects.
   - Ask about:
     - Other forms of pain medication that are not addictive and have fewer side effects.
     - Other forms of pain management such as physical therapy or acupuncture.
   - Opioids should be the last option to treat your pain. If opioids are prescribed they should be used for the shortest possible time. Safely dispose of any unused medications.

3. **Get Help**

   Opioids change how your brain works. They trigger one part “that motivates a person to take more” and another part that makes it hard to stop.¹ Check with your employer or union to find out if they have a program to help, such as:
   - an employee assistance program (EAP); or
   - member assistance program (MAP).
   - Or ask your doctor for help to find the best addiction treatment option for you.
   - **Remember addiction is an illness that can be treated.**
     - Call this confidential national hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Find out more about construction hazards.

Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at https://www.samhsa.gov/ or call their confidential national hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

Contact your union.

Visit CPWR’s opioid resource page to find a “Physicians’ Alert on Pain Management for Construction Workers” and more: https://cpwr.com/research/opioid-resources

Call this confidential national hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

If you or someone you know needs help:

- Contact the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at https://www.samhsa.gov/ or call their confidential national hotline: 1-800-662-HELP (4357).
- Contact your union.
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Sources:


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