



**Jim Persons**  
**jimpersons@safetypride.com**  
**707-889-0881**

## **OSHA's Fatal Four Hazards**

Out of the wide range of risks construction workers face on the jobsite, OSHA has determined that there are four types of safety hazards that are responsible for the majority of worker fatalities.

These hazards are referred to as the “fatal four” or the “focus four.”

The fatal four hazards include falls, electrocutions, struck-by incidents, and caught-in/between incidents.

In past years, the fatal four have been responsible for over 60% of all construction worker fatalities.

### The Fatal Four Hazards:

#### **1. Falls:**

Falls are the number one cause of fatal injuries in construction. The main causes of construction site falls are unprotected edges and openings, improper scaffolding or use, and improper ladder use.

Fall protection is required by OSHA if you are working at a height of six feet or more or anytime someone is working over dangerous machinery and equipment. Cal-OSHA has specific standards for different trades.

Examples of fall protection are guardrails, safety nets, and personal fall arrest systems.

#### **2. Electrocution:**

The next frequent cause of construction site fatalities is electrocution. Electrocutions occur when a person is exposed to a lethal amount of electrical energy.

An electrical hazard may lead to the following causes of death or injury:

Burns	Electrocution
Shock	Arc Flash/ Arc Blast
Fire	Explosions

Many electrocution incidents are caused by a worker coming into contact with or failing to recognize energized sources. Other causes are improper use of extension cords or contact with overhead power lines.

### **3. Struck-by Incidents:**

Struck-by incidents occur when a worker comes into forcible contact with a flying, falling, swinging, or rolling object.

#### **These types of incidents include:**

Struck by falling objects - These types of injuries encompass getting struck by everything from tools and materials being knocked off unprotected edges to a suspended load on a crane coming loose.

Struck by flying objects - This can include being struck by an accidental nail gun discharge, thrown tools or debris, or the tip flying off a saw blade.

Struck by swinging objects - These injuries are caused by swinging objects and usually occur when materials are being moved and something causes the load to sway. They can also happen when a worker is inside the swing radius of a heavy piece of machinery.

Struck by rolling objects - Injuries caused by rolling objects usually involve a worker being struck by a vehicle or heavy piece of machinery while it is in motion. This can also include any object that rolls, moves, or slides on the same level as the worker.

### **4. Caught-in Between:**

Caught-in/between hazards refer to incidents when a worker is caught, stuck, or crushed from materials, equipment, or a collapsing structure.

Some examples of being caught in or in between objects are getting your hand caught in a moving part of equipment, being buried by trench cave-ins, and getting pinned between a wall and a piece of heavy equipment.

These accidents are similar to struck-by incidents with the main difference being that these accidents are a result of crushing injuries, not the initial impact.

#### **Stay Safe & Remember OSHA's "Fatal Four"**

It is important that all workers understand the risks of the fatal four hazards and also know how to prevent them.

Before you start on a new project, evaluate your tasks and your work areas for these types of hazards.

Let a supervisor know should you see anything that could cause an injury.