

## FY24 SE TX Areas Incident Observations\*

The focus four hazards – struck-by, caught-between, falls, and electrical comprise the majority of hazards related to fatalities and injuries. In some ways it seems like we're pretty consistent over the years in the incidents we have. However sometimes there are events, or series of events, which seem to be a bit different. When you look over the years, the SE TX area tends to have a large number of incidents related to ladders, PITs, and trees. We have years when we have an increase in excavation cave-ins (e.g. three in FY 23) heat (e.g. suspected five in FY 24). We sometimes have a 12 – 18-month trends related to clothes pulled into equipment vs gloves, high pressure water, fingers in pneumatic ball valves, and horizontal boring machines etc... Falls through skylights have increased over the last few years. Sometimes the number of incidents doesn't show a trend, it's something that sticks out as different while reading through all the incidents for the year.

Heat, ladders, and falls are generally addressed in flyers sent out around an OSHA campaign and won't be addressed in this flyer.

### Construction

- The industry with the most fatality incidents was NAICS 238160, Roofing Contractors, with four fall related incidents.
- The industry with the most serious incidents was NAICS 238220, Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning Contractors with ten incidents. Five of the incidents involved falls, with three involving falling through the trusses and two involving ladders

### General Industry

- The industry with the most fatality incidents was NAICS 561730, Landscaping with five incidents. Four of the incidents involved trees and the other case was a suspected heat related illness.
- The industry with the most serious incidents was NAICS 332, Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing with 28 incidents. Ten of the incidents involved being caught between stationary and moving equipment or objects.

### Landscaping Activities

We usually have a number of trees related incidents each year. What's seems unusual is the number of other landscaping related incidents. Examples excluding trees:

- Employee was mowing grass in a dried-out retention pond. Employee got off his **tractor** and crawled underneath the bat wings of brush hog. The brush hog wing came down on employee and he died.
- Employees were in the process of grinding a stump using a **stump grinder**. Prior to grinding the stump, a rope was wrapped around a 6' bush and around the waist of the decedent so they can move it out of the way to grind the stump. When the grinding began, the stump grinder got a hold of the rope, pulling them onto the 20" grinding wheel headfirst. The employee died at the scene.
- Employee was attempting to attach a blower part to a golf course **mower** and their fingers got caught by a motor pulley resulting in finger digit amputations.
- Employee suffered a flash burn when lawn **mower** ran over a downed power line that was unseen. A ceramic cutout was also damaged in the storm and was unknown to the employee. The damaged ceramic cutout allowed metal on metal contact to transfer live electrical current. They suffered arc flash burns to face and upper torso.

- Employee was operating a zero-turn **mower** to mow the grass, on a slope, next to a retention pond. The mower slipped on the wet grass and slid into the pond. The employee jumped off of the mower, toward the bank. When he landed, his right foot slipped underneath the mowing deck of the mower. The employee's right foot made contact with the blade of the mower lacerating his right foot.
- Employee was mowing the ditch in front of the church when the **mower** got stuck in the mud. He attempted to free it, and he slipped and fell, and his right foot went under the mower severing the right big toe and the next toe was broken.
- Employee attempted to raise the **mower** deck on a lawn mower while the mower was still running. Their foot got caught in mower blade partially amputating the toes.
- Foreman was blowing leaves with leaf blower while another employee was using a rotary mower. The **mower** struck a penny which flew from the mower blade and embedded into the foreman's face requiring surgical removal.

## Fires

What seems different this year is the number of fire related incidents that aren't directly associated with the handling of flammable liquids or in a chemical plant that utilizes flammable liquids. Examples include:

- Employee was in the process of removing slag from the hot pit. Prior to entering the hot pit, permission to enter must be given. The operators allowed them to enter the hot pit to pick up slag and prep the hot pit for the next pick up. When they were back dragging the hot pit, a fire started on the left side of the wheel **loader** underneath the operator's cab. The cab was consumed with smoke and fire killing the operator.
- Grinding work was being performed on aluminum sleeves for concrete pilings when vapors from contaminated **soil** ignited from the grinding sparks causing a flash fire. The burn victims have been released from hospital, two with 1st degree burns, and one with 2nd degree burns.
- Employees were lighting the **pilot light** on an oven when gas from the pilot ignited in front of them causing second degree burns to the face, neck, and chest areas.
- A forklift driver was moving two totes of turpentine. They noticed one of the turpentine totes was leaking. He stopped the forklift and looked for the leak, but the **forklift** caught fire. They were taken to the hospital due to severe chemical burns and the site was on fire and explosions for several hours.
- Employee was grinding pipe while working on a scissor lift. Employee had **rags** in close proximity that had flammable liquid & vapors on them. The rags were being used to apply coatings to steel pipe. Sparks from the grinder ignited the rags, which subsequently ignited the employee's clothing. Employee suffered approximate burns on 46% of their body.
- Employee was in bucket truck moving between phases (from outside to inside) and was in the process of putting wires together. A jumper, which had unknowingly come loose from its insulation, had inadvertently touched a piece of metal on the backside of the bucket. The employee was going to install another jumper, and it contacted his tie off point, and it energized the metal tie off point. The **hydraulic hose** was damaged and hydraulic oil misted out and caught on fire. The employee sustained first, and second degree burns on parts of his upper back and torso.

## Maintenance Holes

- Employee was on the ground inspecting the inside of a drain positioned near one of the parking lot entrances when a vehicle entered the parking lot and unknowingly struck them. They died onsite.
- A crew was clearing a clog in a sewer line in a residential neighborhood. An employee was using an aluminum pole to guide the hose down the manhole entrance. The pole came into contact with overhead powerlines, shocking him. He was taken to the hospital for treatment and several toes were amputated.

- Employee was placing safety cones around open manhole and tripped into the manhole fracturing both feet.
- Two employees were setting up an inspection camera over a manhole for an inspection. One employee tripped and fell into the manhole falling approximately 20' and suffered a left ankle fracture, right ankle sprain, and a laceration to the back of the skull.

### **Jacks**

- An employee was underneath a single axle trailer without tires that was supported by a bottle jack on the driver's side and wooden blocks on the right side of the trailer. The wheels had been removed and were being taken to a tire shop for tire replacement. The trailer slipped off of the jack pinning the employee to the ground underneath the trailer.
- Three friends of property owner had agreed to lift a mobile home to prevent future flooding at the residence. They were using six 12-ton hydraulic jacks to lift the mobile home. The mobile home collapsed onto one of them during lifting operation.
- Employee was working on the axles of a trailer. The trailer was not properly mounted on the support jack and slid off and fell on their foot requiring surgery.
- Employee was moving a pump case around on jackstands. The load shifted and made contact with employee's right thumb causing a crush injury. Employee received surgery to reattach the fingertip.

### **Fire Ants**

I don't recall a fatality from fire ants in the last 20 years. A fatality and a hospitalization in a year is unusual.

- Employee was working in the backyard of a residence removing fence posts when he fell into an ant pile and began having complaints of shortness of breath prior to going unresponsive.
- Employee was working on an investigation when he pulled a trash can from a suspect's house where there were fire ants, and they were bitten. On the way back to the office the employee developed hives and went into anaphylactic shock and was taken to the emergency room where he was hospitalized.

There are some other incidents that even though there was only one it brings up things to remember or consider:

- Employee was on her break and decided to pet a street cat. The cat scratched and bit the employee's wrist and right hand. That day in the afternoon the employee felt sick due to the wounds caused by the cat and decided to go to the hospital where she was admitted and treated with antibiotics.
- Two employees were working in warehouse with forklifts. The warehouse the bay doors closed to keep cool air inside. They experienced symptoms of carbon monoxide poison and were sent to the ER for an overabundance of caution for observation.
- Six employees were mixing chemicals for pool cleaning services and mixed the wrong ones resulting in exposure to toxic gases.

**\*\*Disclaimer:** Preliminary information – The OSHA Fiscal Year (FY) runs from Oct 1 through September 30. Fatalities and Catastrophes are logged or recorded in various mediums and reports generated using various criteria. Late reporting, natural causes which may have generated an initial report, fatalities transferred to other jurisdictions and other factors may affect the overall numbers over time. SE TX data is edited to determine a count of fatalities/catastrophes under OSHA jurisdiction and may change over time as records are updated.

Narratives are based on the first report of injury and are edited for readability and may not reflect the final results of an investigation. Some incidents may end up not being work related. Once medical determination is made the information will be updated. The information in this flyer is for accident prevention purposes and

trending and is not intended to be a statistical study or evaluation. For questions contact the Houston North OSHA Office, Jim Shelton, CAS, at [shelton.james@dol.gov](mailto:shelton.james@dol.gov)