

# **Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction**

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**Safety Pays. Falls Cost.**

## **Success Story**

# **Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council: Building Safety Together**

**December 2014**



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## Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council: Building Safety Together

May and June were landmark months for national safety efforts in construction this year. The Construction Industry Safety Initiative (CISI) and Incident & Injury-Free (IIF) Executive Forum held Safety Week 2014 during May 4 - 10, and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), with the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction, designated June 6 - 10 as a specific fall prevention focused Stand-Down. Taking both of these efforts a step farther, the Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council (MACSC) initiated their First Annual Safety Month in May 2014. The MACSC is centered in the Greater Philadelphia metropolitan area with participating member sites in southeastern Pennsylvania, Delaware, southern New Jersey, and Maryland. The second key Safety Month participant was OSHA, and other supporters included the



MaryAnn Garrahan OSHA Regional Administrator for Philadelphia and Dennis Dougherty, President of the Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council (MACSC).

General Building Contractors Association (the Philadelphia chapter of the Associated General Contractors), Subcontractors Association of Delaware Valley, Interior Finish Contractors Association of the Delaware Valley, and the Building Trades of Philadelphia Safety Committee. The motto of the Safety Month was Many Roles, One Goal: Building Safety Together. It was modeled on the approach from Safety Week 2014, which was sponsored by the larger contractors that make up the CISI and the IIF Executive Forum; however it was decided to extend the event to an entire month to accommodate all the events that were scheduled. Each participating association, agency, company, union, or individual construction site selected its own activities to engage in the Safety Month.

This effort followed the successful January 2014 Fall Protection Equipment Inspection month-long stand down. During the January event, member companies inspected personal fall arrest system equipment including body harnesses, lanyards, beam straps, retractable lanyards, and associated devices. Equipment that did not pass inspection was removed from use. 18% of the inspected fall

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equipment devices were taken out of service, a remarkable rate since the subcontractors had advance notice of the inspection.

The success of the January event motivated the MACSC Construction Management Subcommittee to continue to improve safety performance. Seeds were planted in the earlier event that encouraged



Ladder Safety presentation by Tom Moulton, Owner, Moulton Ladder and Scaffold.

competitors to collaborate around the shared goal of safety. Contractor and employee participation increased in the new effort; OSHA became an active participating agency, and additional activities were introduced. Each member participant tracked activities to measure impact and success of the Stand Down. OSHA collaborated on designing the tracking system, with special emphasis given to showing Falls Stand Down activity.

The variety and scope of the month's events were impressive. To continue the improvement in safety, the data form tracked activities in detail. The events included fall protection inspection, personal fall arrest equipment inspection, and fall

prevention training. The participants logged guardrail, safety net, barrier, ladder, and scaffold inspection numbers. The personal fall arrest equipment inspection was broken out by equipment inspected and equipment removed from service. An analysis of the numbers showed that while fewer pieces of personal fall arrest equipment needed to be removed this time as compared to the January event, 4% of harnesses, 15% of lanyards, and 10% of self-retracting lanyards were pulled from service. This demonstrates the need to follow up on inspection of safety equipment on a continuing basis. MACSC also tracked training efforts and use of OSHA resources, such as speakers, website, or OSHA publications.

Since the January Fall Protection Equipment Inspection event was so successful, it was decided that OSHA would also train its employees to inspect fall protection equipment using the same approach. Andy DeLair, MSA Construction Market Sales Manager, Dona File, MACSC Founder and Past President and LF Driscoll Safety Director, and Hillary Blecker from PhilaPOSH led the training. Thirty OSHA compliance staff and Pennsylvania Consultation staff were trained using presentations, live demonstrations, and hands-on fall protection equipment inspections. The attendees had the opportunity to view some of the latest fall protection equipment. This event was extremely successful and supported the collaborative approach that the MACSC was promoting. Both OSHA



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and industry have now been trained similarly, and this will encourage continuing dialogue around promoting the mutual goal of safety.

Over 30 organizations participated in the Safety Month with more than 7,000 employees actively participating in the stand down events. Events covered topics such as confined space, driver safety, work fatigue, and ergonomics, in addition to fall protection. Examples demonstrating the variety of the Safety Month activities can be seen at the websites of Belcher Roofing Corporation, Skanska USA Building, and L.F. Driscoll.

Belcher Roofing Corporation, a commercial and industrial roofing contractor serving eastern Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland, has long been striving to improve the safety of their workers, believing that safety and education have a positive return on investment. The company's real life experience has clearly demonstrated that while there are certainly time and cost challenges to be met, once those issues are addressed and the work force is properly trained, equipped, and motivated then quality increases and production labor costs actually decrease compared to pre-safety figures. Belcher's three main areas of focus are safety, quality, and production and the company is an active member of the MACSC, with their safety director serving on the Executive Board. Belcher Roofing has also



Andy DeLair, MSA providing fall protection equipment inspection training to OSHA compliance officers.



Belcher Roofing participants in the Safety Stand Down.

worked with OSHA to improve its safety culture. As part of their participation in the May Annual Safety Month, Belcher made a written promise to its employees to provide the training and equipment for employees to work safely on the jobsite. Belcher then asked employees to commit to using the training and equipment on the job. Because safety equipment is no longer considered unnecessary or clumsy and it is part of the standard operating procedures of the company, this endeavor was successful. During the Falls Stand Down portion of Safety Month, OSHA's Regional Labor Liaison visited three active

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Belcher sites and participated in fall protection toolbox talks delivered by the company's Vice President and their Safety Director, reaching 56 of the company's employees.

Skanska USA Building is another company that emphasizes safety and was an active participant in this year's MACSC Safety Month in May 2014. Skanska has two members in MACSC, Frank Baxter, former Council President and current Executive Council Member, and Jennifer Pilgrim, Executive Council Member. Operating out of their Bluebell Pennsylvania office and surrounding area jobsites, they hosted multiple interactions with construction workers and OSHA compliance officers.

Bobby McDonough, OSHA's Acting Area Director for the Wilmington Area Office, was hosted on Skanska's Monday morning "Take 20 for Safety" office-wide conference call. The weekly call allows Skanska to review any incidents, accidents, near misses, and general safety information related to their projects and gives the jobsites time to share what major activities are coming up and discuss potential hazards and controls for those hazards. The call reached site safety representatives from 11 active projects throughout the region. Mr. McDonough spoke for 15 minutes



Bottom Right (Clockwise); Dennis Dougherty (Med-Tex Services), Jennifer Pilgrim (Skanska USA), Frank Baxter (Skanska USA), Bill Reis (Belcher Roofing), Pat Merk (District Council 21), Dona File (L.F. Driscoll), Jim Touey (OSHA Region 2), Nick DeJesse, Area Director (Philadelphia Area Office), Shane Skennoto (Hunter Roberts), Hank Upright (Joseph Dugan, Inc.).  
Top Right: Jim Ryan (INTECH Construction), Chuck Discher (E&R Erectors).



Certificate of Participation.

emphasizing both the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction Stand-Down and the Heat Stress Campaign. Following the dialog, additional resources for the ongoing campaigns and initiatives were forwarded to the employers to be disseminated out to the sites. Other collaborations with OSHA compliance officers included welcoming visits to Skanska jobsites. Compliance officers were able to participate in a Stretch & Flex, a daily ritual that happens on all Skanska projects, giving teams a chance to gather onsite and interact for the first few minutes of the workday, while allowing workers to ease into the day's physical activity. Skanska also takes this time to speak to the crews about upcoming items on the jobsite, and also to inspire teambuilding. OSHA Compliance officers

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participated in this event on two jobsites, and spoke to the trades about their role in construction safety advocacy.

There were 11 Skanska site projects in the region, and approximately 1,000 employees were reached by the end of the Stand Down. Skanska used the collection of data from this and other Safety Month events as an indicator of performance and to determine the impact on workers, demonstrating that Skanska is actively inspiring safe behavior in the workforce.

L.F. Driscoll also participated in the Safety Month with several different activities. The Philadelphia Building Trades Safety Committee joined them in a safety walk-through at the University of Pennsylvania Health System South Pavilion Expansion Project. L.F. Driscoll also had the MSA fall truck come to the site, and there was a stand-down with 275 workers. A lunch and learn with a demonstration was arranged, and Safety Month t-shirts were distributed to all the participants.

The OSHA Regional Administrator, MaryAnn Garrahan, and Regional Compliance Assistance Specialist, Isabel DeOliveira, attended events at L.F. Driscoll's two Voluntary Protection Program sites. They had the opportunity to attend a worker forum at one site and a safety audit meeting at the other. This helped promote the goals of the National Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction as well enhancing cooperation between industry and OSHA.

L.F. Driscoll conducted a total of 387 training hours at 12 different jobsites during the Safety Month, including the topics of fall protection, rigging, and material handling. Their AtlantiCare Mainland Project took the initiative to conduct a lunch and learn every Friday in May for jobsite foremen and stewards.

Dennis Dougherty, President of MACSC and representative from Med-Tex Services, highlights the success of the Safety Month by stating "Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council is thriving with



Workers participating in training hours at a Driscoll worksite.

motivated members dedicated to promoting the safety and health of workers. We are honored to have the support, resources and long partnership with OSHA in the Mid-Atlantic region to help make our impact as successful as it has been. The MACSC Safety Month and OSHA National Campaign is an excellent example of multiple companies, organizations and

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administrations working together for a common cause. MACSC is proud of the steadily growing recognition in our industry of safety being a core competency in premier construction companies.”

Mary Ann Garrahan, OSHA Regional Administrator in Philadelphia added, “Through OSHA’s National Fall [Prevention] Campaign and MACSC’s safety month activities, we jointly expanded our impact in reaching key stakeholders and informing them about fall and other safety and health hazards prevalent in the construction industry. Our strong partnership with MACSC highlights our collaborative efforts to ensure that each working man and woman returns safely to their loved ones each day. We look forward to future opportunities to work closely with MACSC on worker safety endeavors. Special thanks to Jim Touey, our Labor Liaison without whose tireless efforts, the data collection would not have been possible.”

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## MACSC Partners



Dale Corporation

Gilbane Building Company

Hunter Roberts Construction Group

Skanska USA Building, Inc.

HSC Builders & Construction Managers

Intech Construction, LLC

LF Driscoll Co., LLC

P. Agnes, Inc.

TN Ward Company

Tutor Perini Building Corp.

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