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Building News

Construction Sector Reports the Highest Industry Accident Rate in the World of Work

Construction sector reports the highest industry accident rate in the world of work. Construction workers are also those who perceive more clearly the lack of job safety. In all, 97.8% of them, according to the Department of Employment. In fact, one of every three work accidents takes place in a building site.

With things as they are, scientific work on the subject is almost non-existent. We have found an exception in the Higher Technical School of Civil Engineering of the University of Granada. The area of Construction Engineering, and specifically the group which works with Professor María del Carmen Rubio, has set in motion a research line called Occupational hazard prevention (PRL) in building sites.

Workers' training is very limited, almost non-existent. "Although in the last years awareness has raised significantly on the part of the parties concerned (promoters, building contractots and subcontractors, workers) there is still a lot to do. In fact, regulations are being observed at a formal level, but they are not always put into practice", UGR professor points out.

Professors Menéndez Ondina and Andreu Abela have directed the research work and it has taken place in the construction work carried out in Andalusia in the first quarter of 2001. A representative sample of the building works has been selected according to criteria like company size, construction work siting, budget, execution time and typology.

Survey and results

The implementation of the Royal Decree 1627/97, which states the minimum health and safety provisions applicable to construction sites, has been analysed by means of a survey aimed at construction directors, safety and health coordinators, site managers, subcontractors and workers.

Among the results obtained, one could emphasize the deficiencies in the observance of several provisions of the construction rgulations, such as those relating to the safety and health coordinator, the accident book, safety and health plans or training and information for workers.

Subsequently, in the period from August of 2002 and January of 2003, this research group has carried out a study subsidized by the Ministry for Public Works [B.O.E. (Spanish Congressional Record) no. 43, Ministerial Order FOM/312/2002) with the object of analysing the incidence of suncontracting in occupational hazard prevention in the contruction of transport infrastructure in Andalusia. This work carried out by professors Menéndez Ondina, Rubio Gámez, Rubio Romero and Pérez Pérez, has allowed to know the current situation of occupational hazard prevention in the construction of roads and the AVE (high speed train).

"The situation has improved quite a lot from the first scientific work, but there is still a lot to do", Prof. Rubio points out; she thinks that it is necessary to promote this kind of studies with independent researchers, experienced in construction and with training in PRL. Such research works allow to have an impartial view very appreciated by the agents who take part in the productive process, especially by workers, the most affected.

The ex-president of the Spanish Economic and Social Council (CES), Federico Durán, author of a report on work safety commissioned by the Government two years ago, regrets that Public Administration has not applied the suggestions of the report presented in March of 2001, like training in PRL.

This research group has set in motion the Certificate of University

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- Skyline-Changing, 80-Story, 900,000-SF Condo Tower on South Michigan Avenue Contract Awarded to Leopardo Construction
- Newly-Renovated Bathroom Showcasing Decorative Concrete Fixtures
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Expert "Coordinator of Safety and Health in Construction Work", officially approved by labor authorities as "Advanced Expert in Occupational Hazard Prevention from the School of Civil Engineers, to promote construction experts training.

Prevention is still a matter pending for the Spanich system, especially in construction, with figures much higher than other countries members of the EU, even though they have common regulations.

Posted 10th November 2006



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