

# DEADLY SKYLINE

MAY 2026



An Annual Report on  
Construction Fatalities  
in New York State

  
**NYCOSH**  
NEW YORK COMMITTEE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH

**Report Author and Principal Researcher**  
Samantha Fisher, M.P.H.  
Industrial Hygienist, NYCOSH

**Contributing Author and Research Support**  
Charlene Obernauer, M.A.  
Executive Director, NYCOSH

**Edited by Lara Maldjian, M.P.H.**  
Associate Director, NYCOSH

**Report Design**  
Marci Rosenblum, Tricomm Creative



**About the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH):** NYCOSH is a membership organization of workers, unions, community-based organizations, workers' rights activists, and health and safety professionals. NYCOSH uses training, education, and advocacy to improve health and safety conditions in our workplaces, our communities, and our environment. Founded in 1979 on the principle that workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths are preventable, NYCOSH works to extend and defend every person's right to a safe and healthy workplace.

NYCOSH appreciates the assistance provided by many during this project, including, but not limited to, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the New York State Department of Labor, New York City Department of Health, and the New York City Department of Buildings.

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# INTRODUCTION

Every year in New York State, dozens of construction workers leave for work and do not come home. In 2024, that number was 55.<sup>1</sup> Behind each fatality is often preventable failures like a worksite where cutting corners was permitted or ignored, a scaffold erected without proper bracing, a worker never told (in a language they understood) that they had the right to refuse dangerous work. These deaths often do not happen randomly. They also tend to be concentrated among immigrant workers, at non-union job sites, and in an enforcement environment where inspections are down, fear of reporting among workers is up, and fines are declining. The Deadly Skyline report aims to document the full scope of this crisis and makes the case for the stronger protections, meaningful enforcement, and structural accountability that New York's construction workers deserve.

Construction workers in New York continue to die at alarming and preventable rates, underscoring an urgent need for stronger protections, oversight, and accountability across the construction industry. This trend reflects a combination of systemic issues that leave workers exposed to preventable hazards. Workers routinely encounter dangerous conditions, including inadequate fall protection, insufficient training, and pressure to work quickly under unsafe circumstances.

OSHA inspection activity has never recovered from its pre-pandemic levels, and federal oversight has reduced all of New York State. In New York City, the NYC Department of

Buildings continues to face staffing shortages and high vacancy rates that limit proactive enforcement and timely inspections.

Year after year, our report also shows that immigrant workers are disproportionately affected. A significant share of construction fatalities in New York City involves Latinx workers, many of whom face additional vulnerabilities such as language barriers, job insecurity, limited access to safety training or worker protections, and heightened fear of retaliation. These factors can make it significantly more difficult for workers to speak up about hazards or refuse dangerous work, which ultimately further increases their risk of serious injury or death.

Construction remains one of the most hazardous industries in the United States, and across New York State, workers put their lives on the line every day to build and maintain our infrastructure. The Deadly Skyline report, published by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH), documents fatality trends in detail and situates them within the broader context of weakened enforcement and structural inequities in the industry. Drawing on the most recent data from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, along with other sources, the report analyzes patterns in construction deaths and puts forward concrete recommendations aimed at preventing future fatalities through strengthening enforcement and improving conditions on construction sites citywide.

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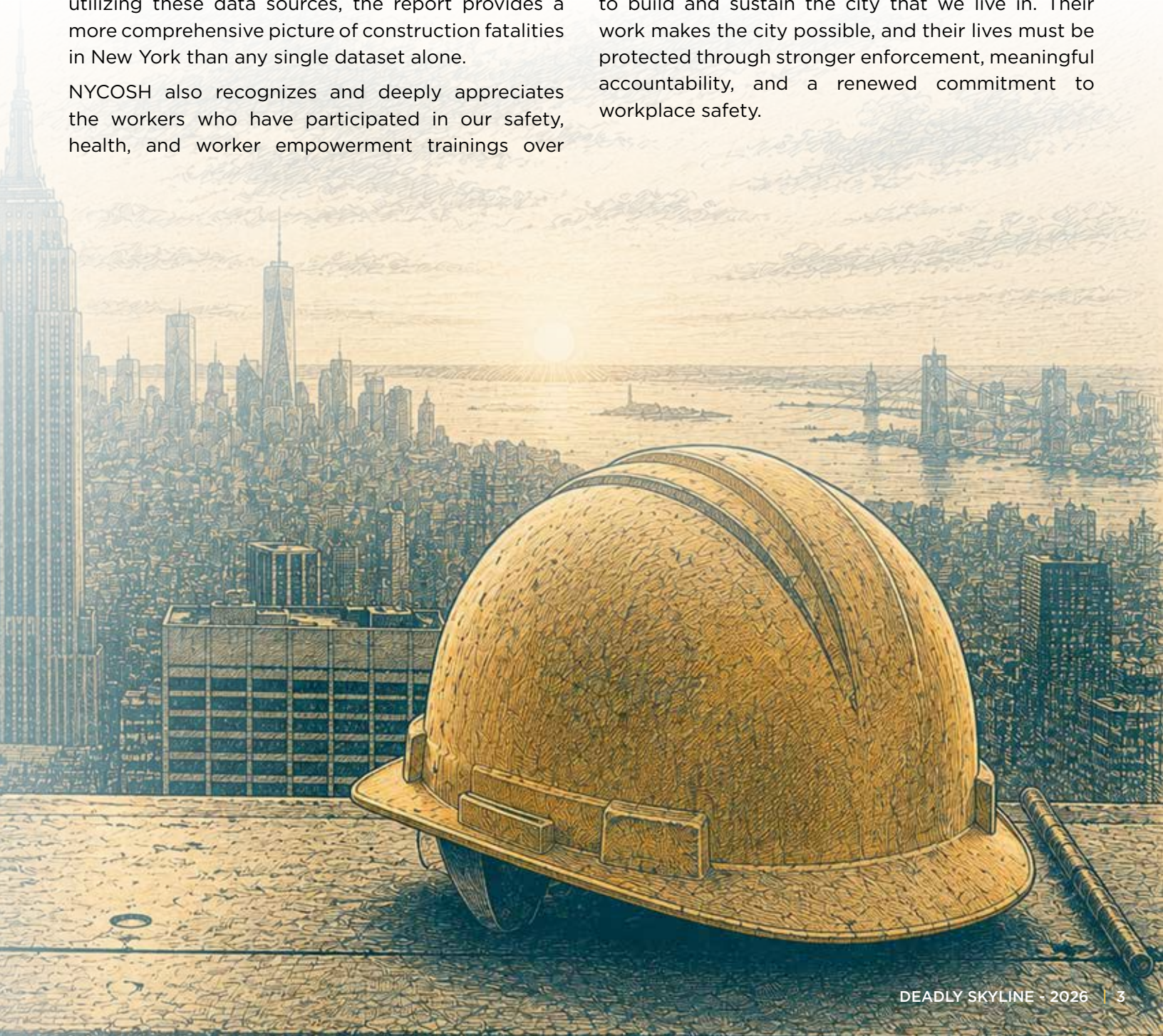
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal occupational injuries in New York State, including New York City, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm)

# METHODOLOGY

The Deadly Skyline report is produced by NYCOSH using data compiled from multiple sources, including the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the New York City Department of Buildings, the New York State Department of Labor and its Workplace Fatalities Registry, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), and media reporting. By utilizing these data sources, the report provides a more comprehensive picture of construction fatalities in New York than any single dataset alone.

NYCOSH also recognizes and deeply appreciates the workers who have participated in our safety, health, and worker empowerment trainings over

the past year. In a political moment that has made speaking up feel increasingly dangerous for working people and immigrant workers in particular, workers' engagement, courage, and commitment to protecting themselves and their coworkers is a powerful act. This report is dedicated to New York's construction workers, who face serious risks every day in order to build and sustain the city that we live in. Their work makes the city possible, and their lives must be protected through stronger enforcement, meaningful accountability, and a renewed commitment to workplace safety.



# SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

## **New York City's construction fatality numbers decreased but remained elevated throughout 2024.**

19 construction workers died in 2024, compared to 30 fatalities in 2023 and 24 in 2022.<sup>2</sup>

## **New York State's construction industry saw reduced fatality numbers but remained highly dangerous for workers in 2024.**

The number of construction workers who died in New York State decreased from 74 workers killed in 2023 to 55 workers in 2024.<sup>3</sup>

## **Construction fatality rates decreased in New York City and New York State.**

Rates of construction fatalities remain high despite some decline. New York City's rate was 11.6 per 100,000 in 2023, compared with 9.4 per 100,000 in 2024. Similarly, New York State reported 10.4 per 100,000 in 2023 and 8.9 per 100,000 in 2024.<sup>4</sup>

## **Latinx workers were more likely to die on the job in NYS.**

Latinx workers make up a disproportionately high percentage of worker fatalities in New York. An estimated 18.6% of New York State's workers are Latinx, and in 2024, 25.8% of total worker fatalities were of Latinx workers.<sup>3</sup>

## **Non-union job sites remained especially dangerous for workers.**

NYCOSH analyzed OSHA's 31 New York State-based construction fatality investigations in 2024 and found that in New York State, 81% of the construction workers who died were non-union.<sup>5</sup>

## **OSHA construction fines for fatality cases decreased.**

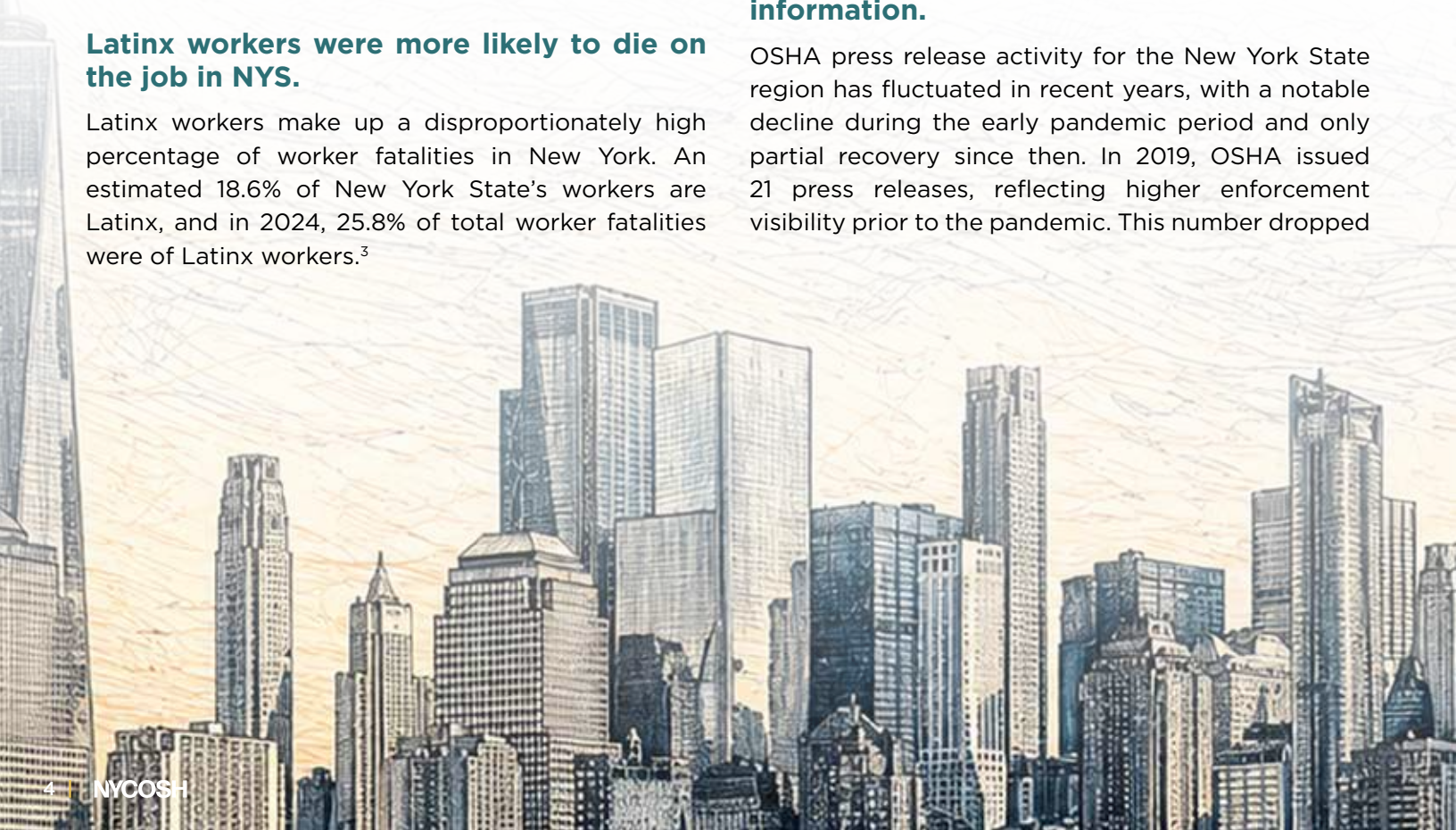
The average fine amount in 2024 was \$25,295 down from \$32,123 in 2023. This is the lowest average fine amount since 2017.

## **NYS OSHA inspections are still below pre-pandemic numbers.**

In New York State, OSHA conducted 3,162 inspections in 2025, representing a 7.3% decrease from 3,411 inspections in 2024, and a 29.1% decrease compared to pre-pandemic levels in 2019 (4,455 inspections).<sup>6</sup>

## **OSHA continued to issue little public information.**

OSHA press release activity for the New York State region has fluctuated in recent years, with a notable decline during the early pandemic period and only partial recovery since then. In 2019, OSHA issued 21 press releases, reflecting higher enforcement visibility prior to the pandemic. This number dropped



sharply in 2020 to 14, and remained consistently low until 2024, when press release activity increased to 20, approaching, but still not fully reaching, pre-pandemic levels. In 2025, OSHA issued just 3 press releases, the lowest number of press releases since NYCOSH began publishing this report and reviewing this data.

Overall, these trends suggest that OSHA's public communication and enforcement signaling has not consistently returned to pre-pandemic levels, raising ongoing concerns about visibility, deterrence, and accountability in workplace safety enforcement.<sup>7</sup>

### **OSHA violations coincide with construction worker fatalities, yet violations do not prevent contractors from receiving government subsidies.**

NYCOSH analyzed construction fatalities investigated by OSHA in New York State in 2024 and found that 77% of worksites where a worker died also had OSHA violations identified during the inspection.<sup>5</sup> For example, in cases where a worker died from a fall, employers were often cited for failing to provide required safety training or failing to implement fall protection measures such as harnesses or guardrails. Despite these violations and fatalities, there are currently no legal restrictions preventing these employers from receiving public subsidy dollars.

### **Heat related illness and fatalities in the construction industry are a significant issue in NYS.**

Heat is a known occupational health and safety hazard. OSHA accident data revealed that four of the construction fatalities that occurred in NYS happened during heat events, or while temperatures were above 80°F.

### **The New York City Department of Buildings has a higher vacancy rate than the average City agency.**

As of April 2026, the DOB had 1,619 staff employed, with a vacancy rate of 12.6% compared to the vacancy rate of 5.05%, the average for City agencies.

- 2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal occupational injuries in New York City, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-city-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-city-2024.htm)
- 3 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal occupational injuries in New York State, including New York City, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [.bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm)
- 4 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal injury rates by state and industry, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-injury-rates-by-state-and-industry-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-injury-rates-by-state-and-industry-2024.htm)
- 5 Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Accident investigation search. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html](https://osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html)
- 6 Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Inspections within industry search (IMIS). U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/industry.html](https://osha.gov/ords/imis/industry.html)
- 7 Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2024). News Releases. U.S. Department of Labor. [osha.gov/news/newsreleases](https://osha.gov/news/newsreleases)



# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Require & Fund Adequate Safety Education and Training

### Mandate construction training and certification across New York State.

Similar to New York City's Construction Safety Training Law (Local Law 196), other municipalities in New York State should require safety training programs that combine technical instruction with on-the-job learning. These programs are essential for creating safer job sites.

### Ensure funding for accessible training.

Funding mechanisms should be expanded to guarantee that low-income workers can access training without financial barriers. Training should also be accessible in multiple languages.

## Extend & Defend Protective Legislation

### Preserve the Scaffold Safety Law

A foundation of worker health and safety, New York State Labor Law §240 (the Scaffold Safety Law) plays a crucial role in protecting construction workers and should continue to be preserved and utilized. The law allows injured workers or their families to sue employers or building owners in cases where a fall from elevation occurs. Stronger enforcement is critical across NY to prevent avoidable falls and fatalities in the construction industry, ensuring that employers are held accountable for providing safety protections.

### Enforce Carlos' Law to penalize criminal contractors.

Carlos' Law focuses on increasing penalties against corporations whose negligence led to worker injuries or deaths, with fines now reaching up to \$500,000. This law must be used to impose meaningful penalties against negligent employers and ultimately prevent future injuries and death.

## Expand Regulations, Monitoring & Enforcement

### Prosecute negligent contractors statewide.

District attorneys across New York State must follow the example set by Manhattan and Brooklyn by holding negligent contractors criminally accountable when their actions lead to worker injuries or deaths. Prosecutors should be equipped with the staffing and resources needed to pursue workplace safety cases consistently, regardless of employer size or the number of workers affected.

### Suspend or revoke licenses for criminal contractors.

Municipalities must use their licensing and permitting authority to hold negligent contractors accountable, especially those that are repeat offenders. Companies whose owners or managers are convicted of felonies related to worker deaths or injuries should be prevented from obtaining licenses or permits for future projects. Contractors with repeated violations or patterns of negligence should face consequences, including permanent disqualification. These measures are critical to ensure meaningful accountability and prevent ongoing endangerment of workers.

### Protect OSHA.

Recent federal actions, which include agency shutdowns, threats to crucial funding and the continued freezing of worker safety and health training grants, are ultimately undermining protections for workers across New York State. At the same time, key regulatory efforts remain stalled. These developments are weakening OSHA's capacity to effectively protect workers. OSHA is a cornerstone of worker health and safety and needs to be preserved and strengthened moving forward.

### Pass the TEMP Act.

As this report details, temperatures of more than 80 degrees Fahrenheit may have contributed to at least four OSHA-investigated deaths in 2024. With federal heat protections stalled, New York must lead by passing TEMP to require access to water, rest breaks, shade, and other life-saving protections for workers facing dangerous heat conditions.

## **Increase Funding & Fill Vacancies within the New York City Department of Buildings (DOB)**

The NYC DOB plays a vital role in enforcing construction safety and preventing workplace fatalities. With construction-related deaths on the rise, the DOB requires increased funding to effectively oversee and regulate job sites. Further, the agency must fully utilize its allocated resources to reduce its vacancy rate.

## **Reform Subsidy Procurement & Promote Responsible Contracting**

### **End public funding for repeat offenders.**

Contractors with safety and wage violations should be disqualified from receiving New York State and City subsidies.

### **Tie subsidies to worker protections.**

All public funds should require compliance with wage laws, comprehensive training programs, and local hiring initiatives to benefit the workers who are building New York's infrastructure. Developers receiving subsidies must ensure their subcontractors also meet these standards.

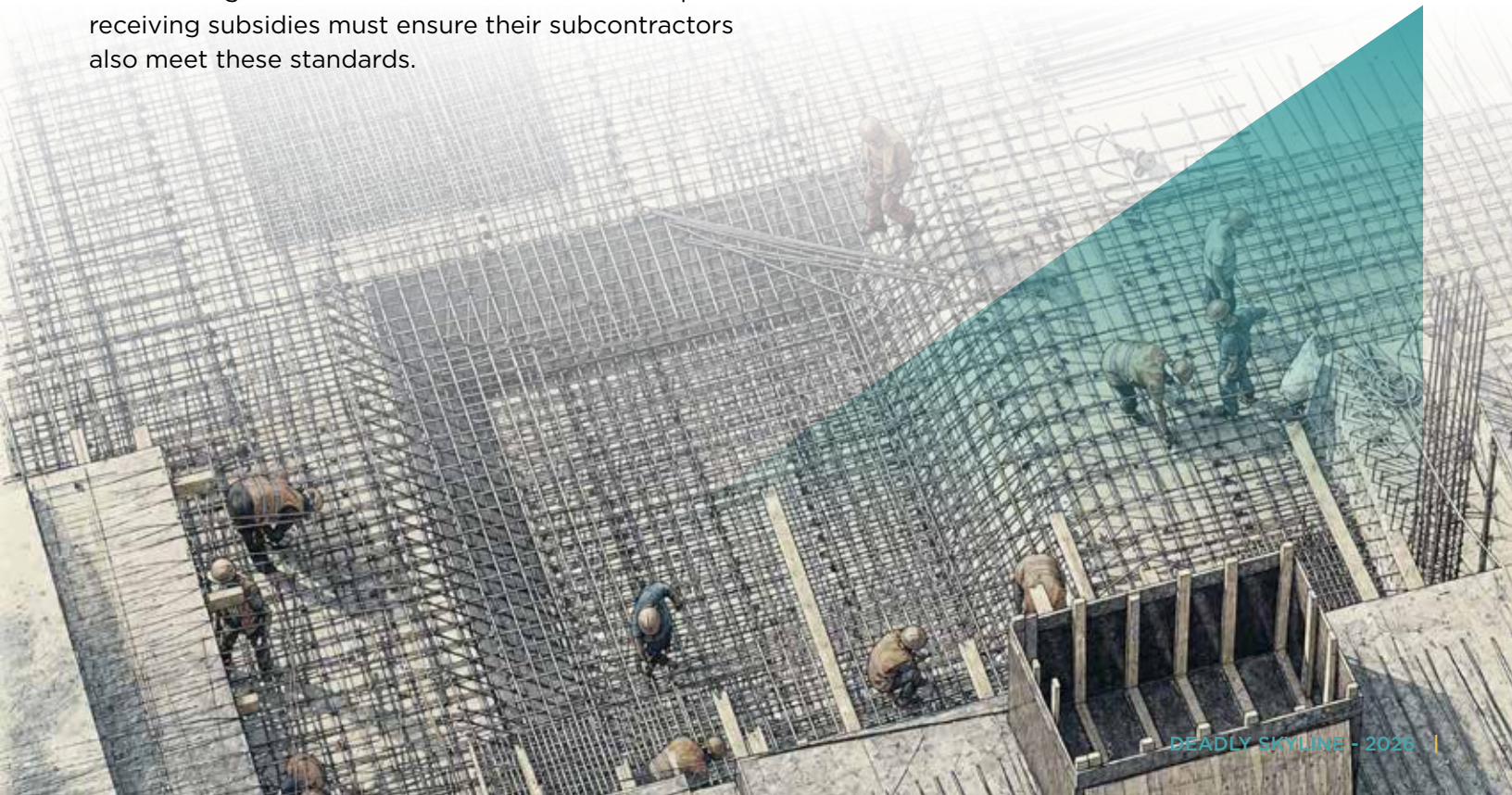
## **Protect Latinx & Immigrant Workers**

### **Address disparities in workplace fatalities.**

Latinx workers continue to be killed on the job at disproportionately high rates. This pattern is driven by dangerous job assignments, inadequate protections, and weak enforcement. At the same time, Latinx workers make up a growing share of New York's workforce, meaning more workers are potentially being put in high-risk conditions without the protections they need. If we fail to address these disparities, we will continue to allow preventable injuries and deaths to persist.

### **Proactively enforce protections.**

Immigrant workers, particularly those who are undocumented, often face systemic exploitation, fear of retaliation and additional barriers to reporting unsafe working conditions. New York State and New York City must take aggressive and proactive enforcement action. This approach includes increased inspections, a focus on holding employers accountable, and the implementation of strong anti-retaliation protections for workers.



# FINDINGS



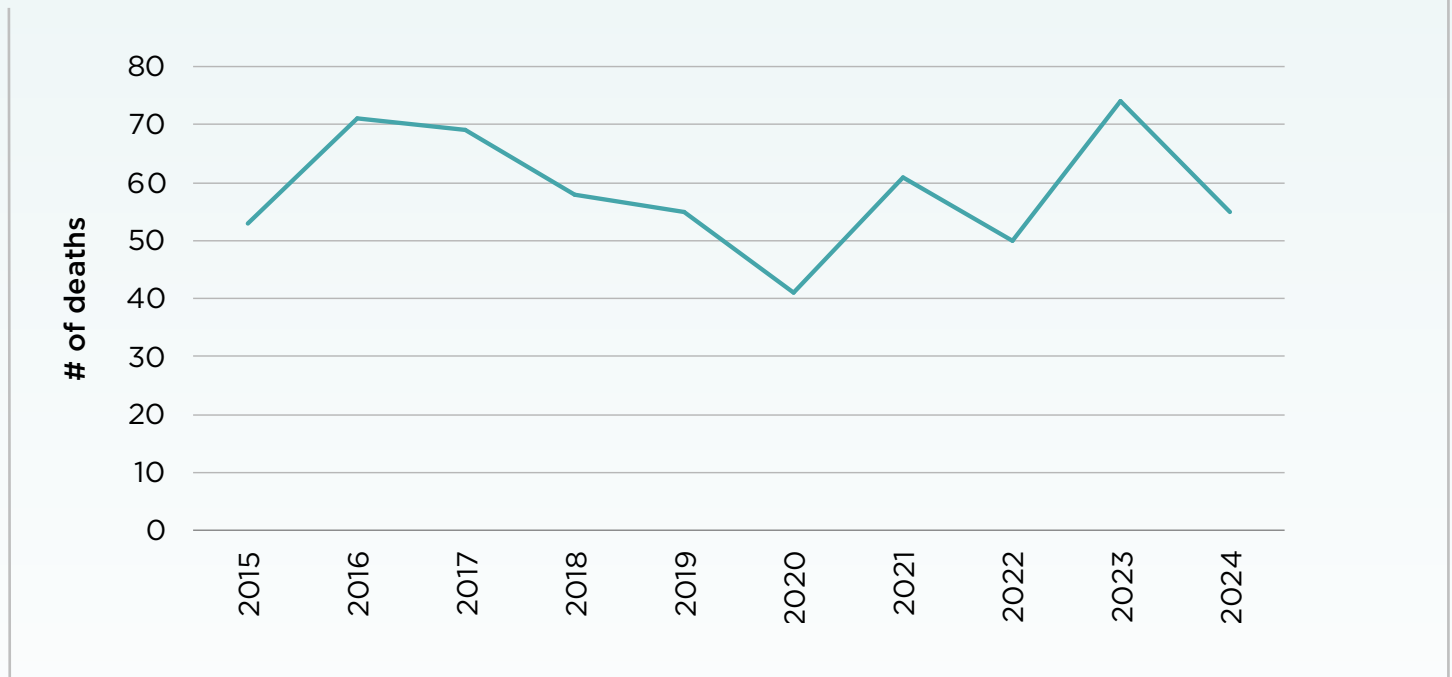
## New York State's construction industry remained highly dangerous for workers in 2024.<sup>8</sup>

New York State's construction industry remains one of the most dangerous sectors for workers. Although fatalities have declined slightly compared with recent peak years, the numbers remain elevated. In 2024, 55 construction workers died across New York State underscoring the persistent risks workers face in this industry.

The construction industry in New York State as of December 2024 employed approximately 389,300 workers.<sup>9</sup> The industry plays a critical role in building and maintaining the state's infrastructure. However,

it remains one of the most hazardous occupations. Between 2015 and 2024, at least 587 construction workers have died on the job in New York State. Fatalities have fluctuated over the past decade, including a sharp increase from 50 deaths in 2022 to 74 in 2023, the highest number recorded during this period. Although fatalities declined to 55 in 2024, the number of deaths remains elevated compared with several earlier years, underscoring the continued dangers construction workers face and the ongoing need for stronger safety protections.

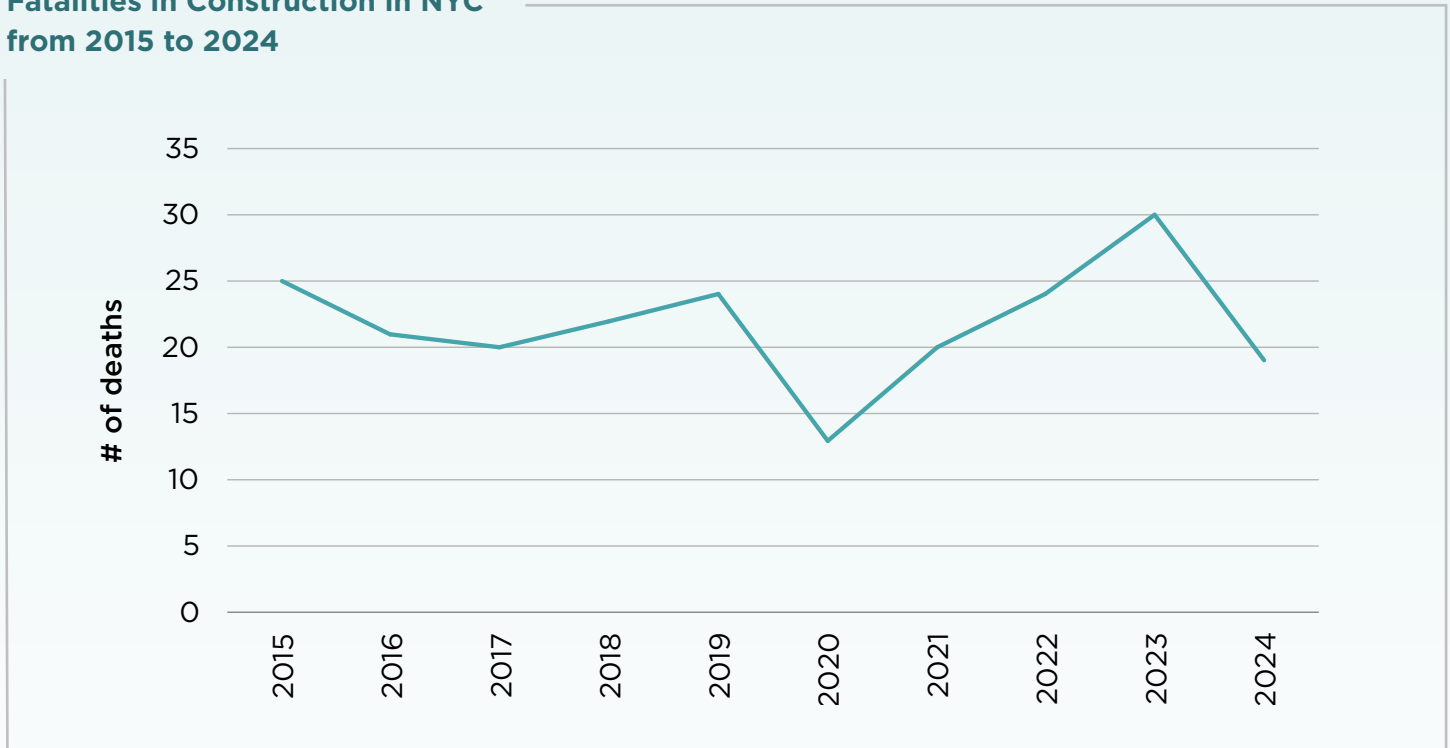
**Fatalities in Construction in NYS from 2015 to 2024 (Including NYC)**



Construction worker fatalities in New York City have fluctuated over the past decade, but recent years have seen some of the highest fatality totals on record. In 2023, 30 construction workers died in New York City, representing the highest number of fatalities during the 2015 to 2024 period and a sharp increase from 20 deaths in 2021 and 13 deaths in 2020, which was

the lowest observed total in the decade. Construction fatalities in New York City declined to 19 in 2024. Between 2015 and 2024, a total of 218 construction workers died in New York City, averaging about 22 fatalities per year, underscoring the persistent dangers faced by workers in the construction industry.

### Fatalities in Construction in NYC from 2015 to 2024



<sup>8</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal occupational injuries in New York State, including New York City, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm)

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (n.d.). All employees, construction, New York [Data set]. U.S. Department of Labor. [data.bls.gov/timeseries/SMS36000002000000001?amp%253bdata\\_tool=XGtable&output\\_view=data&include\\_graphs=true](https://data.bls.gov/timeseries/SMS36000002000000001?amp%253bdata_tool=XGtable&output_view=data&include_graphs=true)

# FINDINGS

Construction fatality rates remain elevated despite some decline in 2024. In New York City, the fatality rate decreased from 11.6 per 100,000 workers in 2023 to 9.4 per 100,000 in 2024. A similar pattern was observed statewide, where the construction fatality rate declined from 10.4 per 100,000 in 2023 to 8.9 per 100,000 in 2024. Although rates have fallen from the previous year, they remain high and continue to reflect the persistent risks faced by construction workers.

In 2024, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported significant disparities in fatality rates across different worker categories in New York State (NYS) and New York City (NYC).<sup>10</sup> For all workers, the fatality rate in New York State was 2.4 deaths per 100,000 workers, while in New York City, it was notably lower at 1.5 deaths per 100,000. Again, when examining construction workers specifically, fatality

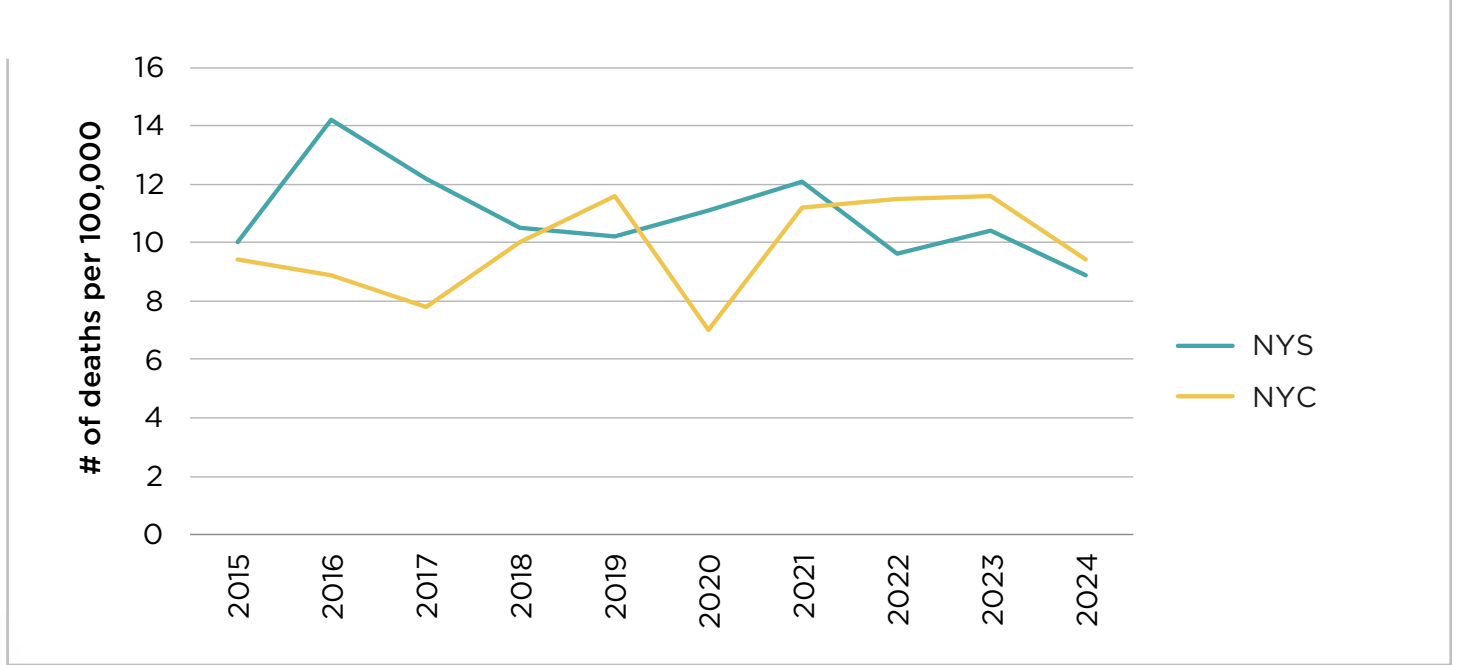
rates are substantially higher than those of the overall workforce. In 2024, the construction fatality rate in New York State was 8.9 deaths per 100,000 workers, while New York City's rate was even higher at 9.4 per 100,000. This indicates that construction workers face fatality risks several times greater than workers across all industries. In New York City, construction workers are more than six times as likely to experience a fatal workplace incident compared with the average worker citywide.

These figures highlight the persistent dangers associated with construction work, particularly in dense urban environments like New York City. The fact that the city's construction fatality rate exceeds the statewide rate underscores the need for stronger enforcement of safety regulations, as well as continued investment in worker training, protective equipment, and other safety measures.

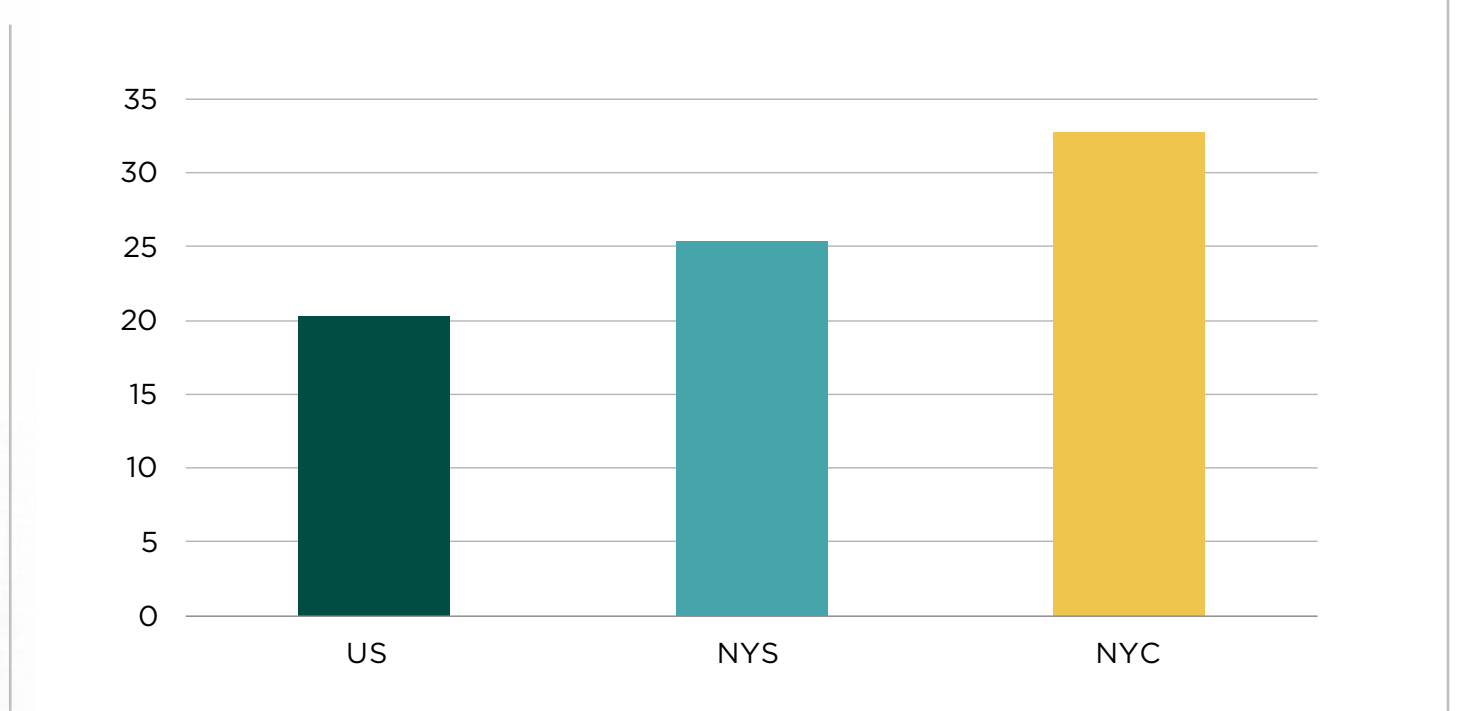
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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026, February 19). Fatal injury rates by state of incident and industry, 2024. Source: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-injury-rates-by-state-and-industry-2024.htm](https://bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-injury-rates-by-state-and-industry-2024.htm)

**Construction Fatality Rates in New York State vs. New York City (per 100,000 workers, BLS)**



**Percent of Construction Worker Fatalities Among All Worker Fatalities in US, NYS, and NYC, 2024 BLS Data**



# FINDINGS

## 2024 Construction Fatalities and High Heat

NYCOSH research revealed four construction fatalities in New York State that occurred when temperatures met or exceeded 80°F at the time of the incident. Research demonstrates that occupational heat stress begins at temperatures below what the public considers extreme due to the cumulative impact of environmental heat (including direct sunlight) and metabolic heat (generated from physical labor). In other words, a construction worker performing strenuous outdoor construction tasks faces compounding thermal stress.

OSHA has documented that outdoor workers have died of heat stroke when the day's maximum heat index reached only 86°F, and that less severe heat-

related illnesses occur at even lower values.<sup>11</sup> A CDC retrospective analysis of 25 outdoor occupational heat fatalities and serious injuries from 2011–2016 found that six of 14 deaths occurred when the heat index was below 91°F.<sup>12</sup> New York State data reinforces this urgency: the New York State Insurance Fund found that work-related injuries increase by approximately 29% on days when temperatures exceed 90°F, data that likely understates the true toll given widespread underreporting.<sup>15</sup>

The following chart details the incidents and related temperatures:

## 2024 New York OSHA-Investigated Fatalities with Estimated Temperature at Incident Above 80°F

Date	Employer	Location	Incident Time	Est. Temp at Incident	Heat-Compounding Factors
6/5/2024	S&S General Construction	Long Island City, NY	4:30 PM	~86°F	Peak afternoon heat; concrete radiant heat; prolonged elevated outdoor exposure
7/1/2024	Truckin' Construction Corp.	Port Washington, NY	11:35 AM	~82°F	Rising midday heat; direct sun; heavy demolition labor
7/10/2024	Roma Scaffolding, Inc.	Manhattan, NY	2:47 PM	~83°F	Peak afternoon; urban heat island; physical debris removal at elevation
7/29/2024	Bill Richard Electric	Huntington, NY	12:01 PM	~96°F	Extreme heat event; garage radiant heat; overhead physical exertion

Temperatures at the time of incident are estimated from AccuWeather historical daily high/low data for the nearest regional station using standard diurnal temperature curves. Estimates should be treated as approximations.



## The New York City Department of Buildings must hire for all vacant positions and New York City must increase the agency's budget

Construction safety in New York City requires strong oversight and enforcement. The New York City Department of Buildings (DOB), which is responsible for regulating construction safety and building compliance, faces ongoing challenges related to funding and staffing capacity.

From 2015 to present, the NYC DOB's blended vacancy rate over a ten-year period was 13.4%. In March 2026, the agency had a 13.6% vacancy rate (the total number of staff employed at the DOB was 1,601, but the agency is authorized to hire 1,853

employees). In April 2026, NYC DOB dropped its vacancy rate to 12.6% by hiring another 18 employees. However, the April 2026 Citywide vacancy rate is 5.05% and the average rate per agency in the past ten years is 3.92%.<sup>14</sup>

The New York City Department of Buildings budget has fluctuated in the past five years,<sup>15</sup> but the FY2026 budget as adopted was \$230.9 million. The recently released May 12, 2026 proposed FY2027 Executive Budget of \$225 million<sup>16</sup>, a reduction of \$8.2 million<sup>17</sup>.

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- <sup>11</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (2024). Heat injury and illness prevention in outdoor and indoor work settings: Notice of proposed rulemaking. U.S. Department of Labor.
- <sup>12</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2018). Evaluation of occupational exposure limits for heat stress in outdoor workers — United States, 2011-2016. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 67(26), 722-726.
- <sup>13</sup> New York State Insurance Fund (NYSIF). (2023). The Impact of Heat on Workplace Injuries in New York State. NYSIF Research Brief 2023-02.
- <sup>14</sup> Office of the New York City Comptroller. (n.d.). Authorized vs. actual city staffing. Found at: [comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/authorized-vs-actual-city-staffing/](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/services/for-the-public/nyc-agency-staffing-dashboard/authorized-vs-actual-city-staffing/)
- <sup>15</sup> New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH). (2025). Deadly Skyline: An annual report on construction fatalities in New York State. Found at: [nycosh.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/NYCOSH-Deadly-Skyline-Report-2025-1.pdf](https://nycosh.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/NYCOSH-Deadly-Skyline-Report-2025-1.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> The City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027. (2026). Expense Revenue Contract. Found at: [nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec26/erc5-26.pdf](https://nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec26/erc5-26.pdf)
- <sup>17</sup> The City of New York Executive Budget Fiscal Year 2027. (2026). Expense Revenue Contract. Found at: [nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec26/erc5-26.pdf](https://nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/exec26/erc5-26.pdf)

## 2

## Non-union job sites are especially dangerous for workers.<sup>18</sup>

NYCOSH analyzed 31 OSHA investigations of construction fatalities in New York State in 2024 and found significant disparities between union and non-union workers. Among these fatalities, 81% of construction workers who died on the job were non-union, indicating that fatalities disproportionately affect workers outside of unionized workplaces.

These findings reflect broader patterns in the construction industry. Unionized workers often

have greater access to safety training, stronger workplace protections, and mechanisms for reporting hazards through collective bargaining agreements. In contrast, non-union workers, who are more likely to be employed on smaller or less-regulated projects, may face weaker safety programs, limited oversight, and greater pressure to prioritize productivity over safety.

The high proportion of fatalities among non-union workers underscores the need for stronger safety enforcement and oversight across the construction industry. Expanding access to safety training and ensuring consistent compliance with workplace safety standards are critical steps toward preventing future construction deaths.

This data reinforces the importance of promoting stronger safety regulations and enforcement, particularly in the non-union sector, to address these disparities.

# 3

## Latinx workers are more likely to die on the job in New York State.

Latinx workers continue to experience a disproportionate share of workplace fatalities in New York. Latinx individuals make up an estimated 18.6%<sup>19</sup> workforce, and they accounted for 25.8% of worker fatalities in 2024.<sup>20</sup> This disparity highlights the elevated risks faced by Latinx workers across multiple industries.

Previous NYCOSH reports have consistently found that Latinx and immigrant workers are more likely to work in jobs with higher safety risks and fewer protections. This trend has intensified as immigrant workers fear deportation for simply going to work, which can also make workers less likely to report unsafe conditions, refuse dangerous tasks, or seek medical care, ultimately increasing their risk of workplace injury and illnesses.<sup>21,22</sup>

Latinx workers are often concentrated in industries where safety oversight may be limited and access to training, protective equipment, and enforcement of workplace standards is inconsistent. In some cases, employers fail to follow required safety regulations,

creating hazardous working conditions that place workers at increased risk of injury or death.

Latinx and immigrant workers may also face barriers to reporting unsafe conditions. Fear of retaliation, job loss, or concerns related to immigration status can discourage workers from raising safety concerns or filing complaints. As a result, dangerous conditions may go unreported and unaddressed, leaving workers exposed to preventable hazards.

These patterns underscore the need for stronger protections and targeted efforts to improve workplace safety for Latinx and immigrant workers. Expanding access to safety training in workers' native languages, strengthening protections against retaliation, increasing outreach to vulnerable communities, and ensuring consistent enforcement of safety regulations are critical steps toward reducing workplace fatalities and promoting safer working conditions for all workers.

<sup>18</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Accident investigation search. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html](https://www.osha-slc.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html)

<sup>19</sup> New York State Office of the State Comptroller. (2022). New York's labor force: Assessing 10-year trends and pandemic setbacks. Found at: [osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/new-york-labor-force-2022.pdf](https://osc.ny.gov/files/reports/pdf/new-york-labor-force-2022.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2026). Fatal occupational injuries in New York State, including New York City, 2024. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm](https://www.bls.gov/iif/state-data/fatal-occupational-injuries-in-new-york-state-including-new-york-city-2024.htm)

<sup>21</sup> Shoemaker, J. D. (2025, July 17). Latinos, roofers are prime ICE targets in WNY. Investigative Post. [investigativepost.org/2025/07/17/latinos-roofers-are-prime-ice-targets-in-wny/](https://www.investigativepost.org/2025/07/17/latinos-roofers-are-prime-ice-targets-in-wny/)

<sup>22</sup> Hogan, G. (2025, November 26). Sidewalk arrests seize New Yorkers in ICE's latest surge. The City. [thecity.nyc/2025/11/26/ice-arrests-streets-sidewalks-detention-immigrants/](https://www.thecity.nyc/2025/11/26/ice-arrests-streets-sidewalks-detention-immigrants/)

# FINDINGS

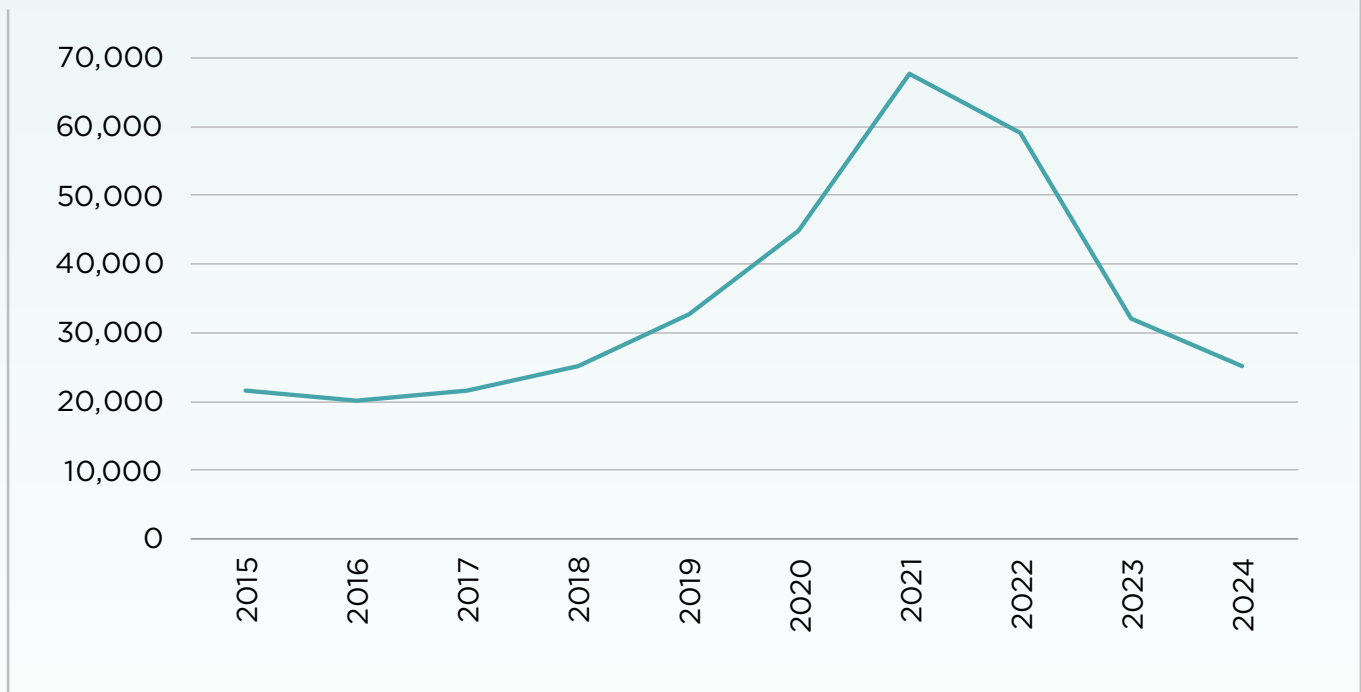
## 4

### OSHA construction fines for construction fatalities have continued to decrease.<sup>23</sup>

Average OSHA penalties in construction fatality cases have shifted noticeably over the past few years, suggesting changes in enforcement focus, case characteristics, and penalty assessment practices. From 2018 to 2021, construction fines steadily and significantly increased because of a 2016 rule that increased the fines that OSHA can levy. Beginning in 2022, average fines declined significantly, and in 2024 OSHA fines for construction fatalities in New York reached \$25,295, their lowest point since 2017.

The continued decline in average fine amount may indicate shifts in OSHA enforcement strategies, changes in the cases being cited, or broader structural factors influencing regulatory practice. These trends underscore the importance of maintaining penalties at levels that effectively deter violations, reinforce compliance, and center worker safety in New York. Robust enforcement and meaningful fines remain essential tools for preventing fatalities and fostering accountability within the construction industry.

**Average OSHA Fines for Construction Fatality Cases**



<sup>23</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Accident investigation search. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html](https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html)

# 5

## OSHA inspection numbers are increasing but still below pre-pandemic numbers.<sup>24</sup>

OSHA inspections in New York State have declined substantially over the past decade, though recent years have shown some recovery following pandemic-related disruptions. In 2010, OSHA conducted 6,281 inspections statewide, but inspection activity gradually declined throughout the 2010s, falling to 4,455 inspections by 2019.

Then, inspection activity dropped sharply in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the years since,

inspection levels have partially rebounded, but OSHA is still below 2019 numbers with just 3,162 inspections in 2025.

The long-term downward trend in OSHA inspections raises important questions about the adequacy of enforcement in protecting worker safety, particularly in high-risk industries such as construction.

### OSHA inspections in NYS



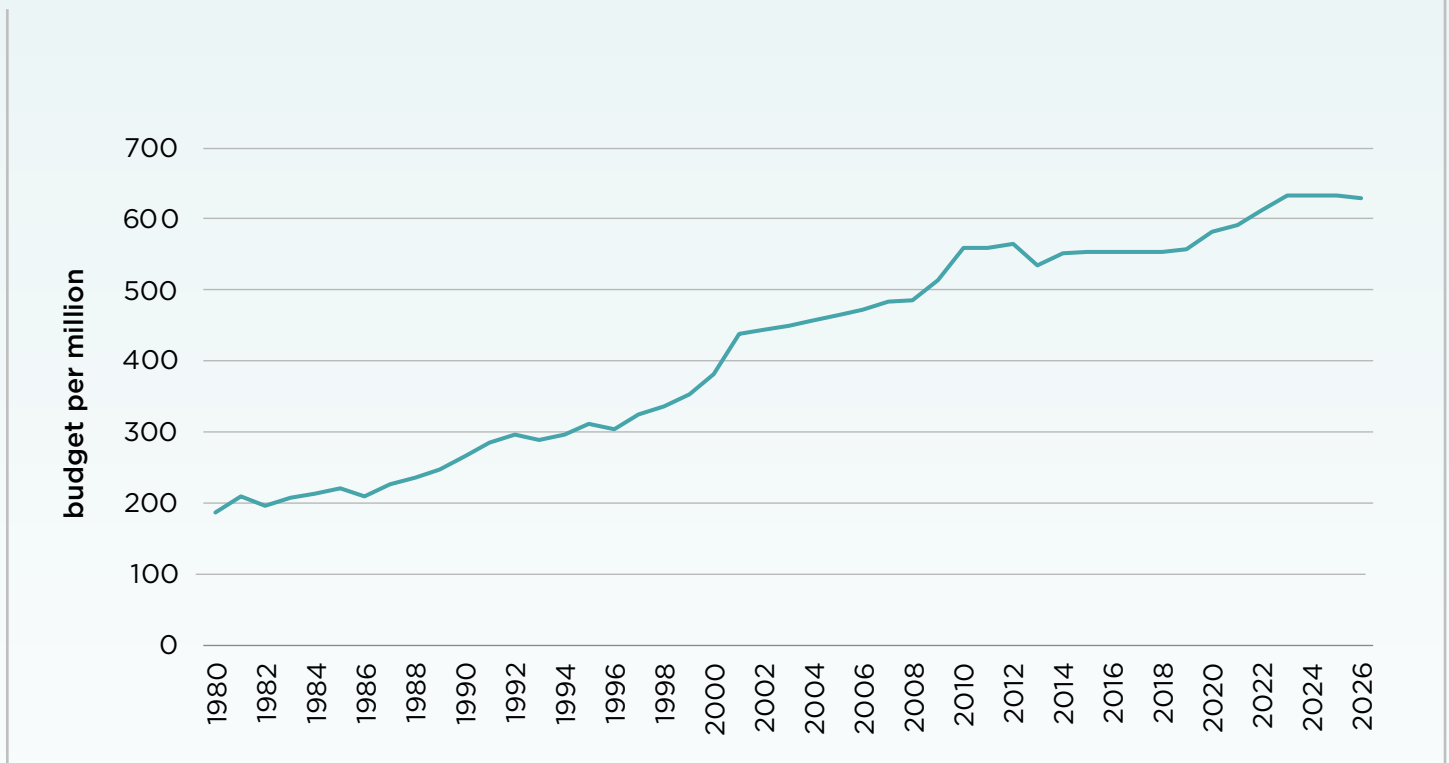
<sup>24</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Inspections within industry search (IMIS). U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/industry.html?p\\_message=2&sic=&naics=236220&state=NY&officetype=All&office=All&startmonth=12&startday=31&startyear=1981&endmonth=01&endday=01&endyear=1981&owner=&scope=&fedagncode=](https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/industry.html?p_message=2&sic=&naics=236220&state=NY&officetype=All&office=All&startmonth=12&startday=31&startyear=1981&endmonth=01&endday=01&endyear=1981&owner=&scope=&fedagncode=)

# FINDINGS

OSHA's budget has fluctuated over time, with periods of both growth and long stretches of relatively flat funding. In 1980, OSHA's budget was approximately \$186.4 million. Funding increased through the 1990s and early 2000s, reaching about \$559 million by 2010. Following this point, OSHA's budget remained relatively stable for several years.

In more recent years, OSHA's budget has been mostly stagnant. Funding was frozen at \$632 million in 2023, 2024, and 2025<sup>25</sup> and dropped slightly in 2026, when OSHA was appropriated \$629.3 million.<sup>26</sup>

## OSHA Budget (in Millions)



<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. (2025). Fiscal year 2026 congressional budget justification (Vol. 2). [dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/general/budget/2026/CBJ-2026-V2-12.pdf](https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/general/budget/2026/CBJ-2026-V2-12.pdf)

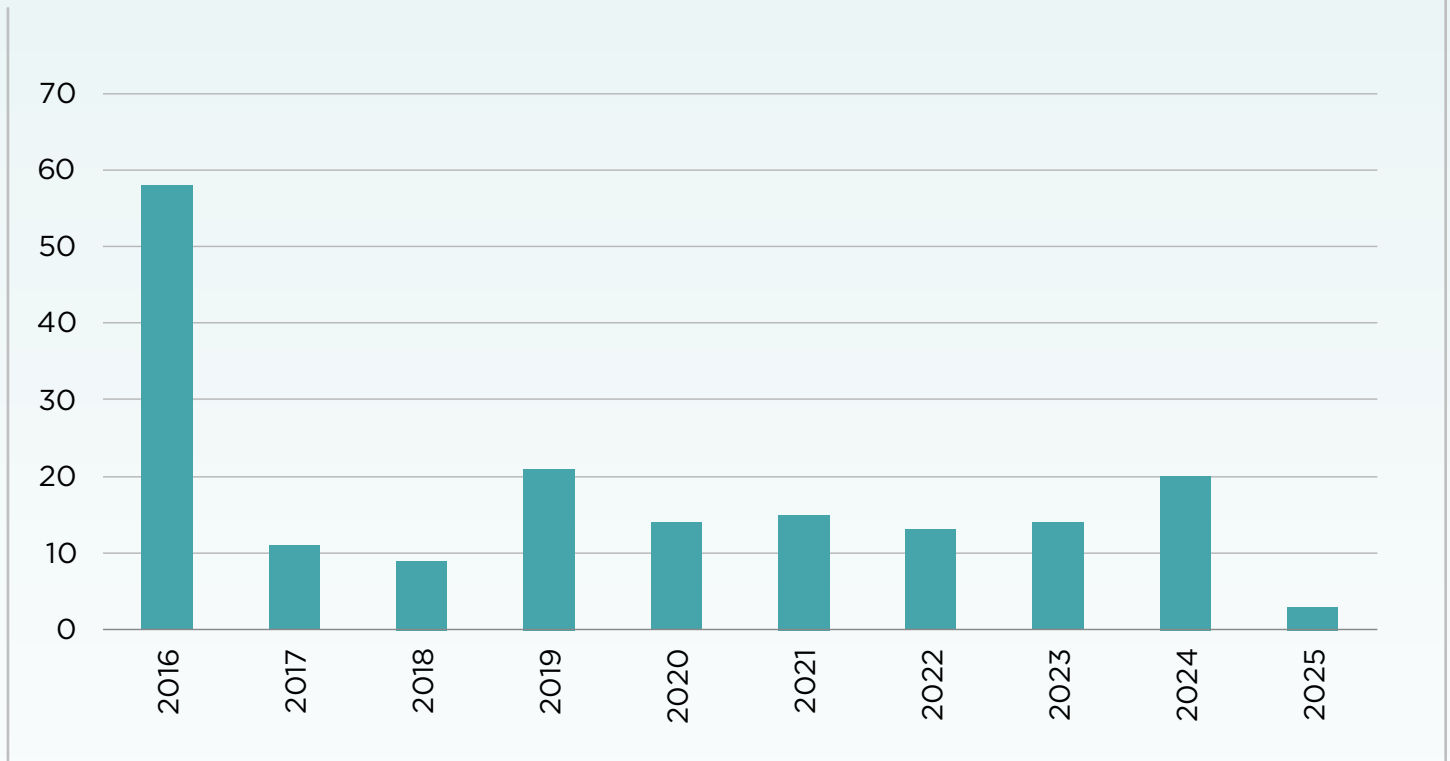
<sup>26</sup> American Industrial Hygiene Association. (2026, February 19). NIOSH, other OEHS agencies funded for fiscal year 2026. Found at: [aiha.org/news/260219-niosh-other-oehs-agencies-funded-for-fiscal-year-2026](https://www.aiha.org/news/260219-niosh-other-oehs-agencies-funded-for-fiscal-year-2026)

The number of press releases issued by OSHA for the NY region has also remained relatively low over the past few years.<sup>27</sup> In 2019, OSHA issued 21 press releases. Although this has wavered between 13-15 press releases in the years that followed, in 2025, press releases fell to just 3 total.

Press releases serve as an important tool in shining a light on employers whose negligence or

misconduct results in worker injuries or fatalities. By eliminating press releases, employers poor safety and health practices occur in the shadows and public accountability is dependent on researchers combing through data. The significant drop in press releases in 2025 represents a shift in the Administration's priorities.

### Press Releases Issued by OSHA



<sup>27</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration. (2024). News Releases. U.S. Department of Labor. [osha.gov/news/newsreleases](https://www.osha.gov/news/newsreleases)

## 6

### **Employers' OSHA violations coincide with construction worker fatalities, and violations do not prevent them from receiving government subsidies**

NYCOSH conducted an analysis of OSHA-inspected construction fatality cases in New York State in 2024 and uncovered a troubling trend: in 77% of cases where a worker died on the job, employers had concurrent OSHA violations.<sup>28</sup> These violations often directly correlated with the circumstances of the fatality. For example, in cases where a worker died from a fatal fall, employers were frequently fined for failing to provide essential safety training and for not implementing required fall protection measures, such as harnesses, guardrails, or safety nets.

This statistic shows a systemic issue in workplace safety enforcement and accountability. Despite these violations, some of which resulted in preventable deaths, there are currently no legal barriers preventing such employers from receiving public subsidy dollars. This lack of accountability not only fails to incentivize safer practices but also perpetuates a cycle where worker lives are undervalued, and safety violations go unaddressed. Stronger enforcement measures and policy changes are needed to ensure that public funds are not benefiting negligent employers.

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<sup>28</sup> Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). (n.d.). Accident investigation search. U.S. Department of Labor. Found at: [osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html](https://www.osha.gov/ords/imis/accidentsearch.html)



# CONCLUSIONS

Construction work remains one of the most dangerous occupations across the US and in NYS. Although fatalities declined slightly in 2024 compared with the previous year, the industry continues to experience consistently high levels of worker deaths. These trends underscore the persistent hazards faced by construction workers and the need for continued attention to workplace safety in the sector.

The data also reveal important disparities in who is most affected by these risks. Latinx workers are largely represented among workplace fatalities in New York State, reflecting broader inequalities in job assignments, safety protections, and access to resources that support safer working conditions.

Fatal incidents are more likely to occur at non-union worksites, suggesting that unionization may contribute to safer workplaces through stronger training, oversight, and worker protections.

At the same time, enforcement mechanisms intended to protect workers remain limited. OSHA inspection numbers in New York State have declined over the long term, financial penalties issued in fatality cases have declined overall, and transparency around enforcement actions in the form of press releases has slowed to a trickle.

Investigations of fatal incidents frequently identify safety violations at worksites where

workers have died. Yet employers responsible for unsafe conditions may still remain eligible for public subsidies or government contracts, raising concerns about accountability and the use of taxpayer funds.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the timing of the data used in this analysis. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) fatality data were not released until February 2026, representing a longer than expected delay due to the government shutdown. As a result, stakeholders are often working with information that does not reflect current conditions. In a high risk industry such as construction, delays in data availability can obscure emerging trends, affect the timely identification of hazards, and limit the ability of agencies and advocates to implement interventions. Ensuring more timely and consistent access to occupational fatality data is critical to supporting proactive, evidence-based efforts to protect worker health and safety.

Overall, these trends suggest that while some indicators have improved modestly in recent years, construction workers in New York continue to face significant and largely preventable risks. Strengthening enforcement, improving transparency, addressing disparities in worker protections, and ensuring accountability for unsafe employers will be critical to reducing future fatalities.



14 Wall St., Suite 5A | New York, NY 10005

[nycosh.org](http://nycosh.org)

