

THE LIUNA ADVANTAGE

FOR CONSTRUCTION USERS AND CONTRACTORS Union Workers Are Safer Workers

In construction, using a union workforce is one of the best ways to reduce accidents, injuries, downtime, and workers' compensation costs. Several recent studies demonstrate that skilled Laborers and other unionized construction workers are safer, involved in fewer accidents, and suffer less loss-time injuries than their nonunion counterparts.

- In Baltimore, Maryland, researchers found that "union construction workers are more experienced, have more stable employment, and have been more exposed to safety training than nonunion workers."¹ The researchers also found that unionized workers had higher safety performance scores than their non-union counterparts, and that workers at non-union work sites had less access to formal safety training and fewer safety meetings.²
- In Washington state, researchers established a link between the kind of health and safety training that every Construction Craft Laborer receives and reduced workers' compensation claims. They concluded that "participation in health and safety training reduced workers' compensation claims by 34 percent."³
- A recent analysis of trench fatality data maintained by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) revealed that the non-union sector's fatality rates were twice as high as those of union trench workers and their employers (11.8 fatalities per million workers versus 5.7 per million).⁴ And the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) and its contractors are working together to reduce that fatality rate even further.

A safe workforce lowers costs, reduces accidents, and increases productivity. Whether measured in higher safety scores, lower insurance rates, or the simple act of a worker returning to his/her family in one piece, safety is good for business. And statistics show that Construction Craft Laborers and other unionized workers make up the safest workforce in the industry.

¹Dedobbeleer N, Champagne F, German P, "Safety Performance among Union and Nonunion Workers in the Construction Industry," *Journal of Occupational Medicine*, 1990; 32:1099-1103.

²Ibid.

³Dong S, Men R, Chowdhury R, Schneider S, "Training Effects on Work-Related Injuries among Laborers," *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, December 2004; 46:1222-1228.

⁴Suruda A, Whitaker B, Blsowick D, Philips P, Sesek R, "Impact of the OSHA Trench and Evacuation Standard on Fatal Injury in the Construction Industry," *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, October 2002; 44:902-905.

