

This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes & trends regarding health and safety.

The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.



THREE HURT IN GRAFTON CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT

TOWN OF GRAFTON — Three construction workers were injured — one of whom was buried — when a wall they were building Friday for a Town of Grafton business bent outward, causing part of the structure to collapse.

The accident occurred around 9:45 a.m. at P2 Auto Vault & Business Condos at 391 Port Washington Road, just south of Lakefield Road.

According to an Ozaukee County Sheriff's Office press release, workers were

constructing a storage condominium unit approximately 60 feet by 60 feet in size. They were in the process of securing wooden roof trusses when the north wall bowed and the roof partially collapsed.

"Three workers who were working on the roof fell approximately 16 feet," according to the press release.

One became trapped under the debris. All three sustained non-life-threatening injuries.

The Ozaukee Central Fire Department

responded and cut through the trusses to free the trapped worker. All three injured workers were taken to Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa, according to the press release.

Grafton town residential and commercial building inspectors, along with Occupational Safety and Health Administration representatives, responded to inspect the construction site, the Sheriff's Office said.

The cause of the collapse is still being determined.

Assisting agencies included the Ozaukee Central Fire Department, Port Washington Fire Department, Cedarburg Fire Department, Southern Ozaukee Fire Department, Ozaukee County Drone Team, and Ozaukee County Emergency Management.

P2 Auto Vault is a gated community that provides large storage units that can be used for everything from collector car storage to a small business operation. The units range in size from 20 feet by 50 feet to 180 feet by 60 feet.

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SERGIO GONZALEZ DIED IN SIERRA MADRE, LOS ANGELES CONSTRUCTION ACCIDENT

A 30-year-old construction worker identified as Sergio Gonzalez has tragically died in a Sierra Madre, Los Angeles construction accident on Sierra Meadow Drive.

Los Angeles County officials are saying that the accident took place around 1:15 PM

on August 15. For undetermined reasons, a retaining wall collapsed and trapped Sergio Gonzalez in the process.

Firefighters and paramedics were called to the scene of the accident to help the victim. He was extricated from the retaining wall with critical injuries.

Sadly, Sergio Gonzalez was beyond medical help and pronounced dead at the scene. A full investigation into the Sierra Madre construction accident remains ongoing.

Liability for Los Angeles Construction Accidents

Construction companies in California have a legal obligation to protect their workers from foreseeable sources of harm. Pursuant to California Labor Code § 6401, "Every employer shall furnish and use safety devices and safeguards, and shall adopt and use practices, means, methods, operations, and processes which are reasonably adequate to render such employment and place of employment safe and healthful. Every employer shall do every other thing reasonably necessary to protect the life, safety, and health of employees." There are several steps in particular that employers, must take to protect workers from being injured by retaining wall collapse.

- **Assessment:** Construction companies must use a qualified person to assess the stability of the wall.
- **Identify:** Construction companies should work to identify and control foreseeable loads against the wall.
- **Control:** Construction companies should create exclusion zones to prevent people from randomly entering into dangerous areas.
- **Support:** Construction companies must provide bracing or other temporary structural support to prevent a wall from collapsing before it's supposed to.

When a worker is injured or killed in California, they or their surviving family members will typically have recourse

through the workers' compensation system.

This is a no-fault insurance scheme designed to help injured workers and family members. There is no need to demonstrate fault through the workers' compensation system. An injured worker may also be able to seek support through a third-party liability claim. A third-party liability claim may be possible if an entity separate from the worker's employer contributed to an accident. This may include general contractors if they failed to maintain a worksite in a reasonably safe condition.

Steps to Take After Los Angeles Construction Accidents

Falls and being hit by falling objects remain one of the leading causes of preventable injury and death for construction workers. Many of these accidents involve collapses or trench cave-ins. According to [NPR](#), "Texas Public Radio and the program 1A finds that more than 250 workers have died in trench cave-ins over the last decade. Deaths that were preventable, experts say." Many different steps should be taken after any accident involving a construction accident.

- **Medical Records:** All of the medical records related to the incident should be collected and preserved.
- **OSHA Report:** The report created by OSHA should be carefully reviewed. It can help reveal any safety lapses that may have contributed to the accident.
- **Legal Review:** Any person injured in a construction accident should carefully consider their options with an experienced legal team.

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HYUNDAI SUPPLIERS FINED BY OSHA FOLLOWING WORKER'S FATAL FORKLIFT ACCIDENT

The federal workplace safety agency has fined three companies — including the battery plant at Hyundai's manufacturing facility in Bryan County — approximately \$27,000 for violations that contributed to the death of a Korean worker in March.

The fines conclude one of the most gruesome chapters in the construction of the Hyundai Motor Group Metaplant America, and amount to less than the retail price of a new electric vehicle made at the facility, which has developed a checkered reputation for safety.

The investigation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was launched after a Korean man, Sunbok You, was torn apart by a forklift at the battery plant, leaving a long bloody trail on the factory floor, according to the Bryan County Sheriff's report carried out after the incident.

The fatality came just days before the metaplant's grand opening, where the chief executive of the metaplant and other senior

Hyundai Motor Group officials extolled the company's safety culture.

The fines were assessed against Beyond Iron Construction LLC., which was helping construct the battery plant; SBY America, which employed the Korean man; and HL-GA Battery, the joint venture between Korean industrial giants Hyundai Motor Group and LG Battery Solutions. The battery plant was the target of the September raid at the plant by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other federal agencies.

OSHA inspectors concluded that the two Georgia-based companies, Beyond Iron and SBY, allowed forklift drivers to exceed speed limits and failed to ensure enough safety measures. The battery company, meanwhile, was cited for failing to submit required reports after injuries. The original fines exceeded \$160,000 but were reduced on appeal, according to OSHA reports.

The fatalities are part of what safety managers and documents suggest has been a culture of lax workplace safety. In a 2024 investigation by *The Current GA*, which found that approximately 10 serious accidents had not been reported by various Korean suppliers at the Ellabell facility between January 2023 and May 2024.

One of those incidents included a Korean engineer being crushed in a conveyor belt he was helping to install at the Hyundai Glovis facility in 2024. The man was still alive when first responders flew him to the hospital. It is not known whether he later survived his injuries, which included a crushed torso.

Three men have died on site during the construction of the metaplant in Ellabell. The first was a construction worker, Victor Gamboa, who was killed in 2023 after a fall due to faulty safety equipment. His employer, Eastern Constructors Inc., was originally fined approximately \$160,000 for allowing Gamboa to use "a defective body harness that had notable indicators of damage and deterioration." The fine was reduced on appeal to approximately \$20,000. HMGMA, the legal entity in charge of the metaplant, later severed ties with the construction firm.

The other death occurred in May 2025, when an American worker was crushed by a load that fell from a forklift.

In September, Hyundai announced it was installing a new official at the site whose responsibilities included coordinating safety measures across all the suppliers at the metaplant. That development came days after the OSHA fine against HI-GA Battery for its violations cited in the March fatality and

the federal raid that resulted in more than 400 workers being detained and deported, including approximately 300 Koreans.

At the time of the federal raid, the United Automobile Workers union issued a statement criticizing Hyundai for dangerous work conditions at the metaplant.

Earlier this month, a nonprofit labor organization in California filed a lawsuit against Hyundai and Kia, its manufacturing facility in Montgomery, Ala., and its supplier plant in west Georgia for alleged human trafficking and child labor abuses. The suit claims such practices give Hyundai and its subsidiaries unfair advantage in pricing when the car companies bid for state contracts.

Last week, Hyundai Chief Executive José Muñoz said the White House phoned him to apologize for September's immigration raid. Speaking at a conference of business leaders in Singapore, Muñoz said Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp had also called him. "I don't know what happened. This is not state jurisdiction," Muñoz quoted Kemp as saying. Citing the need to "bring in talent" to the U.S., President Donald Trump appeared earlier this month to condemn the raid. He told Fox News host Laura Ingraham in an interview there were not enough American workers to perform the "very complicated" and "dangerous" task of building the car batteries.

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Raising The Standard

RTS

CONSULTING INC.

RTS Forklift/Telescopic Reach Forklift/Aerial Lift (1-Day)

The lift training and refresher will be completed in two sessions and covers the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) and EM 385-1-1.

RTS Competent Person Fall Protection (8-Hour)

This eight-hour Fall Protection Competent Person Safety Course will provide an understanding of fall protection with a focus on personal fall protection systems to increase worker safety while working at heights. This training will cover the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) and EM 385-1-1.

RTS Competent Person Supported Scaffold (8-Hour)

This 8-hour supported scaffold training course will educate your personnel on how to minimize or avoid injury and follow the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) and EM 385-1-1. In this class, your personnel will find out about getting at ramps, ladders, stairway towers, and walkways. They'll discover how to avoid hazards with beneficial housekeeping.

For more information please contact Hailey Mesner at hmesner@rtsconsulting.com

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Raising the Standard Consulting will raise the standard of EH&S in your organization through the development of new and innovative strategies and programs driven by your own individual needs.

We want to build relationships with our clients to help create lasting change in their organizations. Contact us today to build a safer tomorrow.

With Aloha,

Stanford Brown, B.Sc., CSP, CSHP, CRSP, CHSC, Senior
Consultant, President & CEO