

SAFETY AT THE TOP

by Levi S. Alejo

“Being at the top” is not safe these days.

Okay, I used a wrong word above. What I’m getting at is that working at heights had been found by OSHA this 2011 to be the most unsafe. This US government regulating body had just released their list of TOP 10 Violations and **FALL PROTECTION** topped their list. It was ranked #2 last Y2010 and it had reached prominence this year.

- **Fall Protection**, with 7,139 violations, is at the top of the list this 2011 exchanging position with Scaffolding which occupied the top position last 2010.
- Very close in second place, with 7,069 violations, was **Scaffolding**. As per OSHA, incidents involving this category result mostly from improper placement and setup of a scaffold.



I have also listed below OSHA’s 2011 statistics on “Serious” and “Willful” violations.

Serious Violations

A “SERIOUS” violation, as per OSHA, is “one in which there is substantial probability that death or serious physical injury could result, and the employer knew or should have known of the hazard.”

Here are the 2011 OSHA’s top 10 [Serious Violations](#):

1. Scaffolding
2. Fall Protection
3. Hazard Communication
4. Lock-out/Tag-out
5. Ladders
6. Electrical – Wiring Methods
7. Powered Industrial Trucks
8. Machine Guarding
9. Respiratory Protection
10. Electrical – General Requirements

Willful Violations

A "WILLFUL" violation, as per OSHA, is "one committed with an intentional disregard of or plain indifference to the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and requirements."

Here are the 2011 OSHA's top 10 [Willful Violations](#):

1. Excavation – Protective Systems
2. Fall Protection
3. Process Safety Management – Hazardous Chemicals
4. Grain Handling Facilities
5. Asbestos
6. Lock-out/Tag-out
7. Machine Guarding
8. Specific Excavation Requirements
9. General Recording Criteria
10. General Duty Clause

Knowing these categories that garnered the highest violations will force us to pose the question in our minds whether Safety is being given the importance it deserves in the workplace. Workers, management, line supervisors, need to realise that safety considerably affects their lives and their families whether they like it or not.

As long as shortcuts, cutting corners, unqualified cost-cutting, and the notion that safety is a compliance requirement and not an integral part of the organization/company priorities..... it will always be (like) an uphill battle with an unbeatable foe....

As safety practitioners....we should never give up. A day completed without any incidents is another day of battle won.....[Levi S. Alejo](#)