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CONSTRUCTION IS A DANGEROUS JOB

- From 2003 to 2006, construction workers were more than nine times as likely to sustain an injury on the job as policemen and firefighters and nearly four times as likely to die from a work-related accident.¹
- In Illinois in 2006, 35 construction workers died from a work-related accident, placing it among the state's most dangerous job industries²
- In the three years before the original Structural Work Act was repealed in 1995, construction falls resulting in death were 48 percent of all fatal falls. Since the repeal, the average has climbed to 58 percent, with the construction industry responsible for 100 percent of fatal falls in 2003 and 80 percent in 2004.³
- Illinois is worst in the region when it comes to number of OSHA inspections of construction sites. Based on recent levels, it would take 121 years for OSHA to inspect all jobsites in Illinois.⁴

How did the Structural Work Act, repealed in 1995, protect construction workers?

- **Inspections:** granted Department of Labor officials the authority to immediately and fully inspect any construction site thought to be dangerous.⁵
- **Safety standards:** required that scaffolds, cranes, and ladders be safely erected and secured.⁶
- **Building Plans:** required architects and draftsmen to follow these standards in their designs.⁷
- **Accountability:** gave injured workers and their families the power to hold accountable anyone involved with keeping a worksite safe, from owners and contractors to architects and foremen.⁸
- **Incentives:** by holding everyone responsible for preventable accidents, the act gave all of these parties incentives to make worksites accident-proof.⁹

¹ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "State Occupational Injuries and Illnesses," at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshstate.htm#IL>

² Ibid.

³ Illinois Department of Public Health, "Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005," (February 1998): 17; (February 1999): 17; (October 1999): 15; (December 2000): 14; (December 2001): 13; (November 2002): 16; (November 2003): 16; (November 2004): 17; (November 2005): 15; (December 2005): 15.

⁴ American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations, "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect, A National and State-by-State Profile of Worker Safety and Health in the United States," 16th ed. (April 2007):76; available from www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/doj_2007.pdf.)

⁵ 749 Ill. Comp. Stat. 150/4 (1994) (repealed 1995).

⁶ 749 Ill. Comp. Stat. 150/1 (1994) (repealed 1995).

⁷ 749 Ill. Comp. Stat. 150/8 (1994) (repealed 1995).

⁸ 749 Ill. Comp. Stat. 150/9 (1994) (repealed 1995).

⁹ See 749 Ill. Comp. Stat. 150 (1994) (repealed 1995).