Laborer, Pipefitter, and Utility Foreman Crushed by Falling Block Wall - Tennessee (FACE 2014-02)

Collapsed wall
(Photo courtesy of TOSHA)
SUMMARY

- On April 18, 2013, a 24-year-old Hispanic laborer and a 37-year-old Hispanic pipefitter were crushed by a falling block wall when it failed.
- A 46-year-old utility foreman was also injured in the incident.
SUMMARY

• At the time of the incident, the laborer was applying caulking to the expansion joints of a block wall, and the pipefitter and the utility foreman were installing piping for the building’s sprinkler system in a trench next to the block wall.

• A wind gust caused the block wall to fall onto the laborer, pipefitter, and utility foreman.
CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

- Deviation from engineering drawings
- Inadequate inspection of rebar placement
- Inadequate bracing for the block wall
- Wall height extending too far above the bracing
- Worker proximity to unbraced block wall
- Lack of competent person to monitor wind speed
- Inadequate training related to masonry wall safety
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Employers should:

  • Ensure that employees follow the engineering/architectural drawings during building construction and obtain engineering approval before plan changes are made.

  East Wall Rebar Location
  (Photo courtesy of TOSHA)
RECOMMENDATIONS

• Employers should:
  • Develop and follow a masonry wall bracing plan, train employees on proper masonry wall bracing, and ensure masonry walls are properly braced throughout the project.

Wall bracing example
(Figure courtesy of MCCA 2012)
RECOMMENDATIONS (Continued)

• Employers should:
  • Develop and implement a restricted/limited access zone.
  • Train workers on the hazards of working around unsupported masonry walls.
  • Assign a competent person trained to monitor wind speeds.
  • Schedule work tasks to limit exposure of nonessential workers to hazards posed by masonry walls under construction.
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Download the full report: https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/pdfs/full201402.pdf
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