

Understanding suicide in construction

Toolbox Talk MH04



The aim of this tool box talk is to help recognise and understand the issues that can lead to suicide within the construction industry

What makes construction workers vulnerable?

- We work in roles that can be isolating
- Employment is dependant on economy
- Spending large amounts of time away from family and friends
- Pain caused by manual labour
- Stress due to time constraints, work environment and poor sleep
- Use of alcohol and mood altering substance to cope
- Stigma of mental illness encourages secrecy and isolation

Warning Signs

- Talking about self harm
- Self criticism, self hatred
- Withdrawing from others
- No hope for the future
- Decreased productivity
- Extreme mood swings



Prevention Tips

- Don't ignore it –speak up if your worried
- Show concern; that you've noticed they are acting differently and ask if things are ok
- Respond quickly if you believe your friend/co-worker is in crisis
- Offer help and support

Suicide is the biggest killer of men under the age of 45. However, male site workers are **three times more likely to commit suicide** than the average male in the UK.

Suicide kills more construction workers than falls.

In 2014, **4,623 men took their own life**, which equated to one man every 2 hours.

According to the Office of National Statistics, between 2011 and 2015, of the **13,232 in-work suicides**, the construction industry accounted for **13.2%** of these. This comes despite the industry accounting for, at the time, roughly **7%** of the UK workforce.

In 2016 **454 construction workers committed suicide**.

High-risk industry

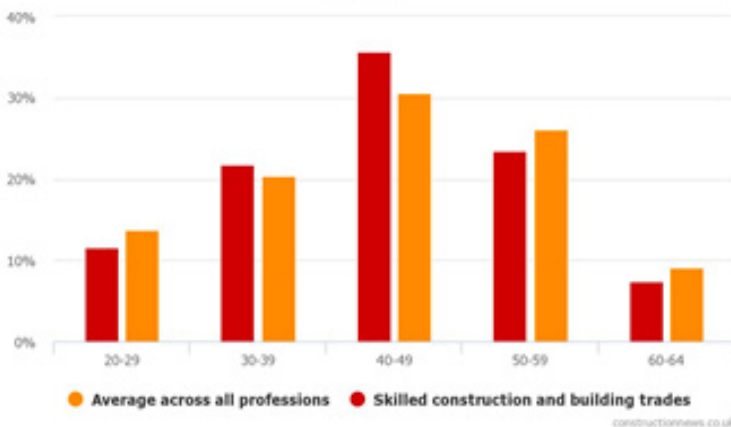
Of the 1,419 people working in skilled construction building trades who took their own lives from 2011 to 2015, 1,409 were men and just 10 were women.

The statistics also show that the risk of suicide for those working in building and construction trades was 1.6 times higher than the national average. Within these workforces, roofers, tilers and slaters faced the highest risk of all: in those trades, the risk of suicide is a staggering 2.7 times higher than the UK average.

Broken down, there were 1,050 suicides among those working in construction and building trades, 357 within building finishing trades and 12 by those employed as construction and building trades supervisors.



Suicides broken down by age, construction trades vs UK average, 2011-15



We don't have to be a mental health worker to help someone who is struggling

LET'S TALK

