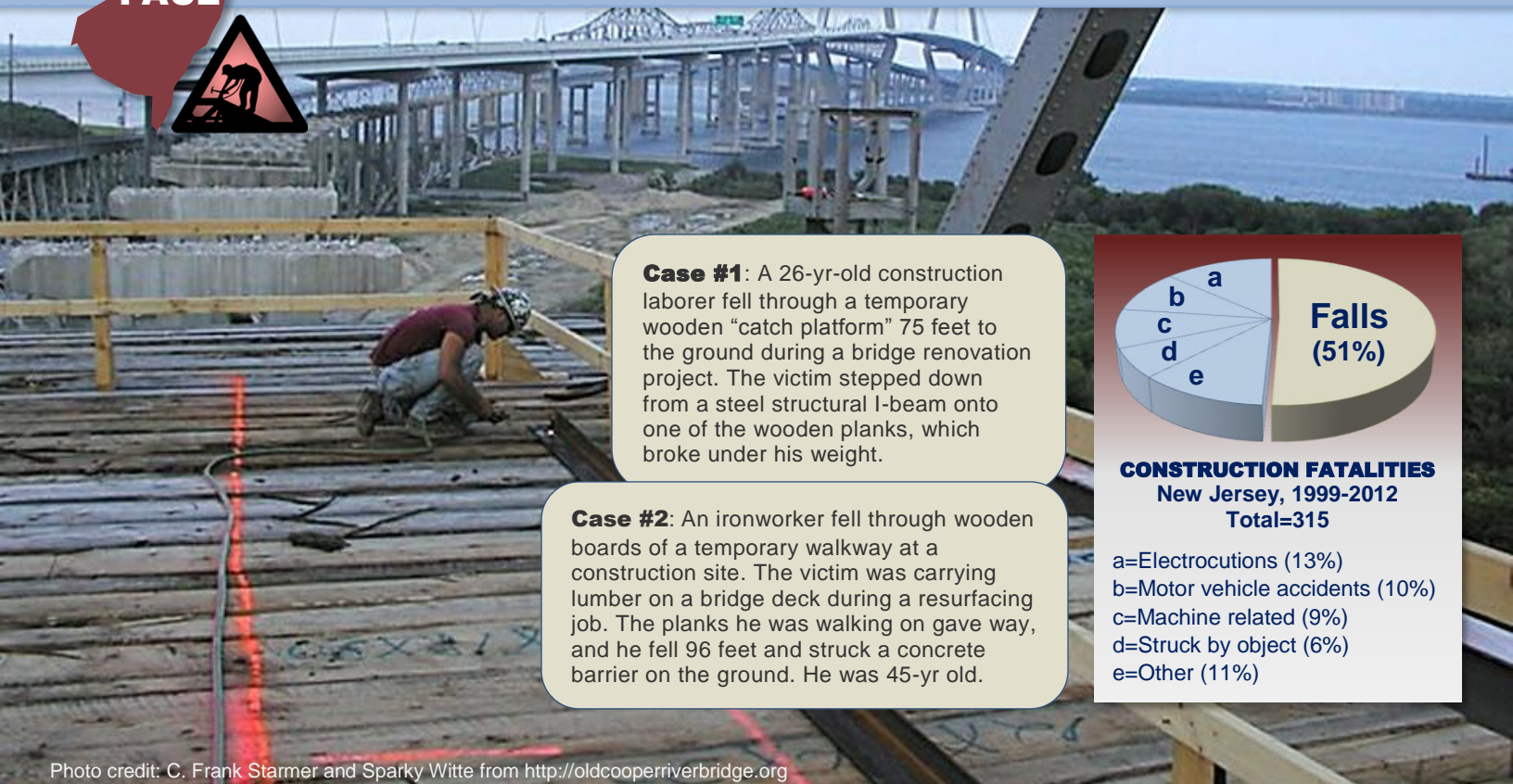


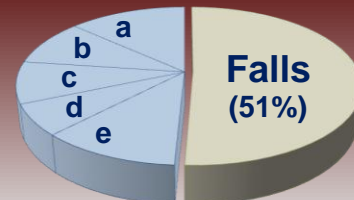


## Two Construction Workers Fall to Their Death through Temporary Wooden Bridge Platforms



**Case #1:** A 26-yr-old construction laborer fell through a temporary wooden “catch platform” 75 feet to the ground during a bridge renovation project. The victim stepped down from a steel structural I-beam onto one of the wooden planks, which broke under his weight.

**Case #2:** An ironworker fell through wooden boards of a temporary walkway at a construction site. The victim was carrying lumber on a bridge deck during a resurfacing job. The planks he was walking on gave way, and he fell 96 feet and struck a concrete barrier on the ground. He was 45-yr old.



**CONSTRUCTION FATALITIES**  
New Jersey, 1999-2012  
Total=315

a=Electrocutions (13%)  
b=Motor vehicle accidents (10%)  
c=Machine related (9%)  
d=Struck by object (6%)  
e=Other (11%)

Photo credit: C. Frank Starmer and Sparky Witte from <http://oldcooperriverbridge.org>

### What Can Be Done to Prevent This from Happening Again

- ✓ Conduct a job hazard analysis and put into place a safety and health plan where workers are assigned tasks.
- ✓ Provide fall protection equipment to all employees working at heights of 6 feet or greater.
- ✓ Use wooden planks or other structures for temporary work platforms that are made of materials that can support at least **four times** the maximum intended weight, as required by OSHA.
- ✓ Design and install individual planks so that shifting does not occur.
- ✓ Designate a person to actively survey the planks and promptly replace those that are damaged.
- ✓ Clearly mark surfaces that are not designed for worker access to prevent entry.



**Did You Know?**  
“Catch platforms” are scaffolds and must comply with OSHA’s Scaffold standard (29 CFR 1926 Subpart L).



The New Jersey Turnpike Authority changed their contract specifications for temporary catch platforms for new bridge construction, deck reconstruction, or bridge deck repair based on recommendations received from industry, labor, and government stakeholders. The revised contract language requires the use of graded lumber, and a plywood/sheeting type of overlay on the planks. Putting these changes into practice will create a safer work environment for workers.



**RESOURCES**



Chris Christie  
Governor

Kim Guadagno  
Lt. Governor

Public Health Services Branch  
Division of Epidemiology, Environmental and Occupational Health  
Consumer, Environmental and Occupational Health Service  
Environmental and Occupational Health Surveillance Program



Mary E. O’Dowd, M.P.H.  
Commissioner

## RESOURCES

1. Safety Standards for Scaffolds Used in the Construction Industry. Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1926, Subpart L. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA): <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/scaffolding/faq.html>
2. OSHA Letter of Interpretation Regarding Catch Platforms:  
[https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show\\_document?p\\_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p\\_id=27373](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=INTERPRETATIONS&p_id=27373)
3. "Catch Platforms" Must Comply with Scaffold Standard. Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America:  
<http://www.lhsfna.org/index.cfm/lifelines/february-2009/osha-catch-platforms-must-conform-with-scaffold-standard/>
4. OSHA's Fall Prevention Campaign: Plan-Provide-Train: Three simple steps to preventing falls: <https://www.osha.gov/stopfalls/>
5. CPWR—The Center for Construction Research and Training: The mission of CPWR is to promote the maintenance and improvement of safe and healthy working conditions for workers in the construction industry through research and training.
  - a. <http://www.cpw.com/> -- Home page
  - b. <http://stopconstructionfalls.com/> -- The website for The Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction, a joint effort by government-labor-management to address the top cause of construction industry fatalities.
6. Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program: FACE conducts investigations of fatal occupational injuries. *FACE Investigation Reports* inform employers and workers of commonly occurring hazardous operations and work practices and provide recommendations to prevent these injuries in the future. The following websites provide interested users with access to the full text of hundreds of FACE reports indexed by industry or cause of fatality:
  - a. NJ Department of Health FACE Project: [http://www.state.nj.us/health/surv/face/njface\\_reports.shtml](http://www.state.nj.us/health/surv/face/njface_reports.shtml)
  - b. NIOSH FACE Program: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/inhouse.html>
  - c. State FACE Reports: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/stateface.html>
7. NIOSH Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction: Facts – Falls Kill!: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/construction/stopfalls.html>



### **PLAN**

*ahead to get the job done safely.*

### **PROVIDE**

*the right equipment.*

### **TRAIN**

*everyone to use the equipment safely.*