

Be Prepared When Accidents Strike

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If you work in the construction industry, there's a good chance that you have heard a heartbreaking story about an accident that occurred at a construction site which resulted in serious injury or death to one or more construction worker(s). Unfortunately, these accidents are a reality in the construction world and can happen even if there is no negligence or mistake by the general contractor or subcontractors. However, amid the calamity and uncertainty, there are some basic steps that everyone can and should follow to protect you and your company.

First and foremost, call the appropriate authorities. If you are present and not involved in the accident, notify the paramedics immediately to ensure that those involved get medical attention as soon as possible. If you are involved in the accident, check yourself for injuries that may need tending to and then call the paramedics so you and anyone else involved get medical attention as soon as possible.

Second, contact your supervisor and inform him/her of the accident. If you are the supervisor, contact your attorney or in-house legal representative. Your representative has likely handled many situations like the one you find yourself in and can walk you through what steps to take. This frees you up to focus on yourself or anyone else that may be injured and need your attention. It also frees you up to start compiling information – such as creating a list of potential witnesses – that may prove important in any investigation that follows.

Third, if the accident results in hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye, employers are required to report the accident to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) within 24 hours. If the accident results in a death, the accident must be reported to OSHA within 8 hours. (<https://www.osha.gov/report.html>)

Finally, you want to ensure that you and your company are prepared in the event that OSHA launches an investigation into what happened. Some simple steps to follow include preserving all records, documents, employee files, and/or correspondence which may be relevant to the accident. Following these simple steps can help protect you and your company in the event that tragedy strikes. If you do find yourself in this kind of situation or have any questions about how to respond to an accident, the KRCL Team has significant experience assisting clients in navigating these types of situations.

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