



Construction Risk Advisor

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AUTOMATION'S THREAT TO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Automation helps construction companies deal with labor shortages and create safer, more efficient job sites. There is one downside, however. According to a recent study by the Midwest Economic Policy Institute and the Project for Middle Class Renewal, automation could displace up to 2.7 million construction workers—almost 49 percent of the nation's blue-collar construction workforce—by 2057.

Fortunately, until every aspect of every task can be automated, there will still be a need for human labor. For job security, the study's co-authors stressed the need to transition workers into new roles that complement the rise of automation in construction.

According to one of the study's co-authors, Frank Manzo IV, increased automation could cause both economic hardship and economic prosperity. In order to achieve prosperity, Manzo recommended that construction companies invest in vocational training. The study also urged lawmakers to consider taxing capital owned by contractors and investing the proceeds into retraining displaced workers.

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RECOMMITMENT TO SAFETY FOR FEMALE WORKERS

OSHA has renewed its relationship with the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC) in an effort to re-establish its commitment to creating safer working conditions for women in the construction industry through its OSHA Alliance Program.

The five-year initiative will address workplace concerns specific to women, including sanitation, how to select appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) and how to address gender-based threats arising from intimidation and violence.

Although OSHA previously launched a webpage dedicated to the safety of female construction workers, the new commitment to safety highlights the industry's new focus toward women during its labor shortage. Less than 9 percent of the construction workforce is female.

By revisiting its emphasis on safety, OSHA hopes to address unique challenges on the job site faced by women, including the following:

- **PPE**—Employers need to make sure there is PPE on the job site that fits women, who are often smaller in stature than men.
- **Lack of sanitary or adequate bathroom facilities**—Some women have reported not drinking water during the day to avoid the need to use unsanitary or inadequate facilities, leading to an increased rate of kidney and bladder infections.

The renewed campaign will use both OSHA's and NAWIC's resources to provide information about and prevent hazards that affect women on the job site.