

Fall Conferences Go to 100% Fall Protection Promoted

Is it possible to achieve 100% fall protection in roofing? Conference participants answered this key question on hand-held response pads, with instant results displayed for all to discuss. At the start, only 19% thought this very possible to achieve. But after a day of expert presentations, discussions, and hands-on exhibits, participants were far more optimistic. Now 46% say it is very possible to achieve 100% fall protection in roofing. "We have more work to do in helping our industry to recognize that 100% fall protection is not only achievable but also profitable for roofing contractors," says Roofers International President Kinsey M. Robinson. "What we don't know makes a big difference in what we think we can do."



Falls are the leading cause of on-the-job injury and death for roofers, with rates four to eight times higher than for other construction trades. Is this how it must be? Or can 100% fall protection in roofing be achieved?

This was the main theme at two one-day OSHA-funded 'Roofing Industry Fall Protection Conferences & Exhibits' held recently in Portland at Local 49 and the Greater Portland Roofers & Waterproofers Training Center.

The two Portland conferences drew 76 of the industry's top estimators, superintendents, foremen, and lead journeyworkers. The participants and expert guest speakers discussed roofing fall protection problems, costs, and solutions.

Attendees participated in a mix of hands-on exhibits of the latest roofing fall protection equipment and presentations tai-

lored for the industry. They were asked to vote their opinions on a series of topics using a hand-held 'Response System.'

"It was really interesting to see what others thought about these issues," said one participant. "I never would have guessed what all the others thought without the response system."

The expert presenters included a leading international authority on fall protection, a loss control representative of CNA insurance, which is one of the largest insurers of roofing contractors in the U.S., a former OSHA compliance officer, and an Oregon OSHA representative.

Equipment exhibitors included Protective Roofing Products LTD, Garlock Equipment Inc., Guardian Fall Protection, Capital Safety-DBI/Sala, and AES Raptor.



Greater Portland Roofers & Waterproofers JATC Coordinator Clint Mapes demonstrates the Roofers Interactive Instructor Presentation Program for conference participants. The program is available as a free download at www.unionroofers.com.



Testing their reaction times with the Roofers Fall Forces Calculator are Roofers Local 49 Business Manager Michael Thompson (left) and Stan Boucher, estimator for steep roofing at Griffith Roofing. The Calculator test showed participants that you could not react fast enough to catch yourself if you fall.

Portland



CNA Insurance Consultant Chris Grover explains that the average direct worker comp cost in Oregon is like the tip of an iceberg. Indirect costs are four to ten times more.

Exhibited equipment ranged from new systems for complete perimeter guarding to anchor systems designed specifically for roofing applications.

Fall protection conferences also were held in Chicago and Minneapolis in 2007. OSHA funds all of the national fall conferences through a grant to the Roofers & Waterproofers Research and Education Joint Trust (Roofers Trust). The Roofers Trust designs and organizes the conferences in cooperation with Local Unions and Local Union JATCs and with help from FOF Communications.

The conference opened with **'How to Profit From 100% Fall Protection in Roofing'** by Chris Grover for CNA insurance. CNA is one of nation's leading insurers of roofing contractors. Grover discussed direct and indirect costs of accidents – an average of \$130,000 for each fall in roofing. He made several concrete recommendations for improving productivity, saving money, and reducing fall risks through 100% fall protection.

Next, Andy Smoka, a safety consultant and former OSHA Compliance Officer focused on **'Motivation of Attitudes and Behavior'**. Smoka's goal is to get participants beyond apathy – to be positive, to show concern, to be aware of consequences, and to be specific in solutions. Smoka got a rousing ovation.

Participants learned about fall impact forces in a presentation by Clint Mapes, Greater Portland Roofers & Waterproofers JATC Coordinator. Using the new **Roofers Trust Interactive Instructor Program**, Clint demonstrated that "catching yourself during a fall is a movie myth, not a reality." (The interactive module and other training modules are available as free downloads at www.unionroofers.com.)

Dr. J. Nigel Ellis, a leading international authority on fall protection, led the next session **Achieving 100% Fall Protection in Roofing**. Dr. Ellis challenged participations to solve specific fall protection problems in roofing using case studies of actual events. Dr. Ellis is a registered Professional Safety Engineer, a Board-Certified Safety Professional, and a Board-Certified Human Factors Professional. He founded the OSHA Training Institute's Fall Protection Training Program and is the author of a definitive textbook **Introduction to Fall Protection**.

The final presentation **'OSHA Technical Assistance and Inspection Process'** allowed participation in a mock OSHA inspection. Participants used a checklist and worked with

Future Conferences

Earlier 'Roofing Industry Fall Protection Conferences & Exhibits' were held in Chicago (see Roofer, 1st Quarter 2007) and Minneapolis, MN (see Roofer, 2nd Quarter 2007). The Roofers Trust expects to continue fall conferences like these in the future.

Andy Smoka and Laird Blanchard of Oregon OSHA to uncover violations on a jobsite mock up.

After a catered lunch hosted by the Roofers' International Union, Roofers Local 49 and the Portland Roofers JATC, participants moved through the equipment manufacturers' exhibits. A manufacturer's representative demonstrated each exhibit.

Each of the two Portland conferences closed with drawings for an International Union watch and other prizes contributed by Roofers Local 49.



Professional Safety Engineer and internationally recognized fall protection expert Dr. J. Nigel Ellis, Ph.D. CSP, P.E., CPE, receives assistance from Lucio Martinez of Arrow Roofing in a demonstration of the dangers of unmarked roof hole covers. Can you guess what Lucio found under the plywood? (www.fallsafety.com)

Safety Consultant and former OSHA Compliance Officer Andy Smoka and Oregon OSHA Representative Laird Blanchard (right) lead participants in a mock OSHA inspection. Here, Smoka describes requirements for placing and securing ladders.



Guardian Fall Protection NW Territory Manager Tom De Roo shows how a safety harness arrests the 6-foot, headfirst fall of a 310-pound dummy. The drop-test showed 831 pounds of force exerted on the dummy's body with the fall arrest system. Without fall protection, the impact force on the body would have been 7,440 pounds. (www.guardianfall.com)



The AES Raptor mobile fall protection cart and roof hole safety net are demonstrated by Marketing Director David John (far right). The Raptor also contains storage boxes so it can perform double duty. (www.raptorsafety.com)



Capital Safety Rep Rick Maurice demonstrates a range of DBI/Sala anchors for flat and steep roofs for use in achieving 100% fall protection. (www.capitalsafety.com)



Jim Sidla, National Sales Manager for Garlock Safety Systems, demonstrates the Fall-Ban perimeter guarding system for use in achieving 100% fall protection. Steve Garlock Equipment, Inc., of Portland provided the Garlock exhibit. (www.railguard.net)



The PR600 mobile fall protection cart and the PR100 perimeter guardrail system are demonstrated by the inventor, Ted Palmer of Protective Roofing Products, Ltd. (www.prplimited.com)