

Acoustical Work – Staying Safe During Acoustical Work Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. **Noise Exposure & Hearing Loss:** Installing acoustic panels often involves power tools and working in enclosed spaces, where noise exceeds 85 dBA. Without hearing protection, workers risk permanent hearing loss and tinnitus.
2. **Dust & Respiratory Hazard:** Materials like fiberglass, mineral wool, and adhesives create airborne dust and fibers. Without respirators, workers may suffer throat, lung irritation or long-term respiratory issues.
3. **Eye & Skin Irritation:** Dust, fine fibers, and adhesive splashes can irritate eyes and skin, necessitating goggles, long sleeves, gloves, and wash stations.
4. **Falls from Height:** Working on scaffolding or lifts while installing ceiling tiles poses fall risks, requiring guardrails, harnesses, and secure platforms.
5. **Repetitive Strain & Ergonomics:** Reaching overhead for extended periods can cause shoulder and arm strain—adjustable ladders or lifts and regular breaks are key.
6. **Cut & Puncture Risk:** Handling metal grid components and cutting panels with utility knives can cause lacerations—sharp-resistant gloves and proper cutting tools are essential.

STATS

- WorkSafeBC reported 25–30 annual construction fatalities in British Columbia (2020–2023), with acoustical workers at risk from falls (40%) and struck-by incidents (15%) during ceiling or wall installations. Hard hats and HVSA are

critical for mitigation.

- CCOHS 2023 data showed that workplaces enforcing respirators and cut-resistant gloves reduced acoustical work injuries by 22%, particularly for tasks like cutting fiberglass or installing panels.
- In 2024, Ontario introduced fines up to \$500,000 for repeat OHS violations, including PPE non-compliance, impacting acoustical contractors failing to provide proper respirators or fall protection.
- In 2024, OSHA recorded 5,190 workplace fatalities, with construction accounting for 21% (1,090 cases). Falls (423 cases) were the leading cause for acoustical workers, followed by struck-by incidents (316 cases), emphasizing the need for fall protection and hard hats.
- In 2024, Respiratory Protection (29 CFR 1926.1153) ranked 5th in construction violations (2,500 citations), often due to inadequate respirators for insulation dust. PPE violations (29 CFR 1910.132) ranked 6th (1,876 citations), including missing safety glasses or gloves during acoustical work.