Cemetery Worker Safety Stats and Facts

FACTS

1. Workers in the cemetery industry can face any number of injuries ranging from falls, injuries related to operating machinery or carrying headstones, as well as hazards related to trenching and excavation.
2. Digging at a grave site is an excavation like those performed in the construction industry. In addition to the hazards workers face by the potential of a wall collapse without proper trench support, they can also be exposed to hazardous chemicals.
3. Workers should have their own personal protective gear such as hard hats to prevent head injury from falling rocks or dirt. Workers should wear respiratory protection to limit the inhalation of elements such as carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and methane that can appear in the soil.
4. An individual can suffocate as a result of being only partially buried in soil. Therefore, it is extremely important to exercise all precautions and follow safety procedures when conducting any kind of excavation to prevent a cave-in.
5. Cemetery workers job duties include: groundskeeping, excavating, and equipment moving and setup, landscaping, and chemical management. Due to the variable nature of their work and the potential fatalities, cemetery workers must use good work practices and get training on job hazards such as field safety, ergonomics, and excavation.

STATS

- A total of 1,142 cemetery worker were fatally injured at work, an average of 190 each year.
- Major events leading to cemetery workers occupational

fatalities included transportation incidents (31%), contact with objects and equipment (25%), falls (23%), and traumatic acute exposures to harmful substances or environments (e.g., electrocution and drowning) (16%).

- Approximately 99% of the fatally injured 1,142 cemetery workers were males.
- Approximately 27% of the fatally injured cemetery workers were self-employed, compared with 20% of all fatally injured U.S. workers during the same period.
- Fatally injured cemetery workers tended to be younger than all fatally injured U.S. workers; 44 (4%) were aged <20 years, and
- 174 (15%) of cemetery workers were aged 25 years when they died.