

# FACE THE FACTS HAZ ALERT

To prevent injuries while working with granite:

- A job hazard analysis should be conducted each day before work commences.
- Employees should be trained in proper material handling procedures that include handling and transport of granite slabs.
- Use slab carts or slab racks to transport granite slabs and use tie-downs to secure the granite slabs to the forklift.
- Work should only be performed when the general contractor has a competent person on the job site.

## WORKERS KILLED WHILE WORKING WITH GRANITE

During 2007-2008, two workers died while working with granite. Following are the case descriptions for both worker deaths in Kentucky:

**Case 1:** In the summer of 2009, a 50-year-old male Lithuanian construction worker was working at a hotel construction site installing vanity tops and sinks. The worker was employed by an out-of-state subcontractor and the general contractor was not on the job site that day. The worker was unloading ten granite vanities from an unsecured homemade platform on a forklift truck by reaching out a second story window. When the worker reached for the last section of granite, it is presumed that he had to climb out the window and onto the platform. The worker and platform fell off the forklift and onto the ground. Emergency medical services were called by a co-worker who



heard a noise and the worker was transported to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

**Case 2:** In 2008, A 42-year-old male Chinese prospective company partner who was a former granite company employee was observing the transfer of a 7'x6'x1" granite slab on a slab cart with no tie-downs. The slab was being tilted by two employees on each end of the cart for a forklift to transfer the slab to a fabrication area. The slab fell over and hit the prospective company partner in the head. The victim was transported to the hospital where he died three days later.

ALWAYS PERFORM A WORKSITE HAZARD ASSESSMENT BEFORE COMMENCING ANY NEW JOB ACTIVITY.

**A JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS SHOULD BE CONDUCTED EACH DAY BEFORE WORK COMMENCES.**

A hazard assessment of the job site should be performed before work commences including hazard awareness and appropriate control measures.

**EMPLOYEES SHOULD BE TRAINED IN PROPER MATERIAL HANDLING PROCEDURES THAT INCLUDE THE HANDLING AND TRANSPORT OF GRANITE SLABS.**

A standard operating procedure (SOP) needs to be developed for the transport, and retrieval of granite slabs. The SOP needs to address receiving and retrieval, appropriate slab cart or rack type for typical sizes and weights of granite slabs, slab rack storage, and avoidance of transport hazards such as lack of support pins, individual compartments, etc. When available, use material handling equipment, such as gantry cranes or fork lifts, with the PROPER attachments, to lift and move slabs. Never stand under or next to slabs that are being moved. Never manually support large stone slabs.

**USE SLAB CARTS OR SLAB RACKS TO TRANSPORT GRANITE SLABS AND USE TIE-DOWNS TO SECURE THE GRANITE SLABS TO THE FORKLIFT.**

Slab carts should be designed by registered professional engineers to account for anticipated load capacities, slab sizes, slab quantities to be transported, and for transfer by forklift. Slab racks could be designed with fixed support pins and individual compartments for each slab. Employers should also ensure that the slab racks are used according to manufacturers' specifications.

**WORK SHOULD ONLY BE PERFORMED WHEN THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR HAS A COMPETENT PERSON ON THE JOB SITE.**

The general contractor was not on the job site on the day of one of the incidents and it is unknown if a competent person was on the site of the other incident. According to CFR 1926.32(f), a competent person is defined as "one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them".

**References:**

1. Massachusetts FACE investigation #05MA059 entitled "Worker killed when crushed by multiple granite slabs".
2. Washington FACE fatality narrative #04WA03101 entitled "Granite installer struck by falling granite slabs"
3. OSHA document, "Hazards of transporting, unloading, storing and handling granite, marble, and stone slabs" at <http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib081208.html>

For more information, contact:

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