



Mental health challenges in the construction industry: A comparison with white-collar jobs

The construction industry faces a significant mental health crisis, with rates of suicide, overdose, and substance abuse drastically higher than the national average and in many cases exceeding those found in white-collar professions.

Here's a breakdown of the statistics

Suicide

- Construction workers have the second highest suicide death rate of all American industries.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported in 2021 that 56 out of every 100,000 male construction workers died by suicide, significantly higher than the national average. This rate is also considerably higher than suicide rates found in industries often considered white-collar, such as finance, insurance, architecture, engineering, and business and financial operations.

Overdose

- Construction has the highest overdose death rate of all American industries.
- Construction workers are seven times more likely to die of an opioid overdose than workers in other industries and represent about 25% of fatal opioid overdoses among all workers.
- A CDC report <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2021/09/14/opioids-in-construction/> indicated that construction workers experienced a disproportionate number of workplace overdose deaths compared to their representation in the workforce. Overdose rates in construction are notably higher than in professions less prone to physically demanding tasks and related pain management issues.

Substance abuse

- Around 15% of all construction workers have a substance abuse disorder, nearly twice the national average.
- Substance use statistics in construction, including alcohol use disorder, heavy alcohol consumption, and illicit drug use, are significantly higher than national averages.
- Construction workers are more likely to misuse prescription opioids and cocaine compared to other professions and have the second highest prevalence of marijuana use after service jobs.

Contributing factors

Several factors contribute to these high rates, including the physically demanding and hazardous nature of the work, a prevalent "macho" culture and associated stigma, job insecurity, long hours and irregular schedules, and limited access to mental health care.

Addressing the issue

Industry organizations, such as [2tuff2talk.com](https://www.2tuff2talk.com), the [Associated General Contractors of America \(AGC\)](https://www.agc.org), [CPWR](https://www.cpw.org), and OSHA, are working to address these challenges. Efforts include raising awareness, providing resources and training, encouraging supportive work environments, and developing strategies for improving workers' mental health. By addressing these factors and promoting a supportive culture, the construction industry can improve the mental well-being of its workforce and reduce the rates of suicide, overdose, and substance abuse.

Visit [2tuff2talk.com](https://www.2tuff2talk.com) for more resources and information