



Workers injured when walls tip over

Four workers suffered broken bones and other injuries in two separate incidents when the walls they were raising fell back onto them. In one of these incidents, three workers were manually lifting a wood frame wall into place on the second floor of a house under construction. The wall was about 10 metres (32 feet) long and 3 metres (10 feet) high. Sheathed with plywood, it weighed 248 kilograms (550 pounds). The wall slipped before it was fully upright, falling back onto the workers. Only one of the three workers escaped injury.

“Walking” a wall upright is common practice on construction sites. However, employers and workers need to know how to prevent losing control of walls.

Safe work practices:

- Establish and enforce safe work procedures to address the hazards associated with raising walls. Include the following:
 - Plan each step of the lift, and specify the role of each worker. Only one person should give the instructions.
 - Ensure that there are no obstructions to prevent walls from being lifted safely.
 - Estimate the wall’s weight using standard weights for the materials. Consider using mechanical wall jacks if the wall is too heavy for manual lifting. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for wall jacks. If the wall is too heavy even for wall jacks, consider using a crane.
 - Take the wall’s size into account. Large walls catch more wind than small ones. Small and light walls are more likely to kick out if inadequately secured.
 - Determine the number of workers needed to carry out the job safely.
 - When using an overhang, secure the bottom of the wall — for example, by securely toe-nailing the bottom plate with sufficient nails of adequate size — to prevent slippage.
 - Install adequate bracing immediately after the wall is upright.
- Provide workers with the information, training, and supervision necessary to ensure their safety when raising walls.
- Provide workers with fall protection as required.

