



OHS AWARENESS OF IMMIGRANT VS CANADIAN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational health and safety (OHS) is a critical area of concern across all industries worldwide, with the aim to protect the workforce from hazards and injuries in the workplace. One of the most significant fields of study is the intersection of OHS with various demographic factors, such as the experiences of immigrant workers in the workforces.

Immigration into Canada is the key contributor to economic growth. Immigration accounts for close to 100% of Canada's labor force growth¹. Immigrants in Canada often work in jobs that are higher in physical demand or in under-qualified jobs². As a result, immigrants in Canada experience higher risk of work-related injuries and illnesses compared to non-immigrant Canadian workers.⁵

4. NOVELTY AND IMPORTANCE

Previous studies have shown that there is an OHS knowledge gap between immigrant workers and non-immigrant workers in Canada². However, there are no studies that compare the OHS knowledge levels between recent immigrant workers versus established immigrant workers.

This research would be a guide to understanding the gaps, implementing effective and targeted training programs or strategies. It aims to enhance the focus on the challenges immigrant workers face, ensuring their well-being and safety as members of the Canadian workforce.

The results of this study could identify whether there is a gap in the OHS awareness levels between new immigrants versus established immigrants, identifying if there are gaps in the currently implemented strategies for the provided OHS training and how they are delivered to the immigrant workers in Ontario considering factors such as language barriers and cultural barriers.

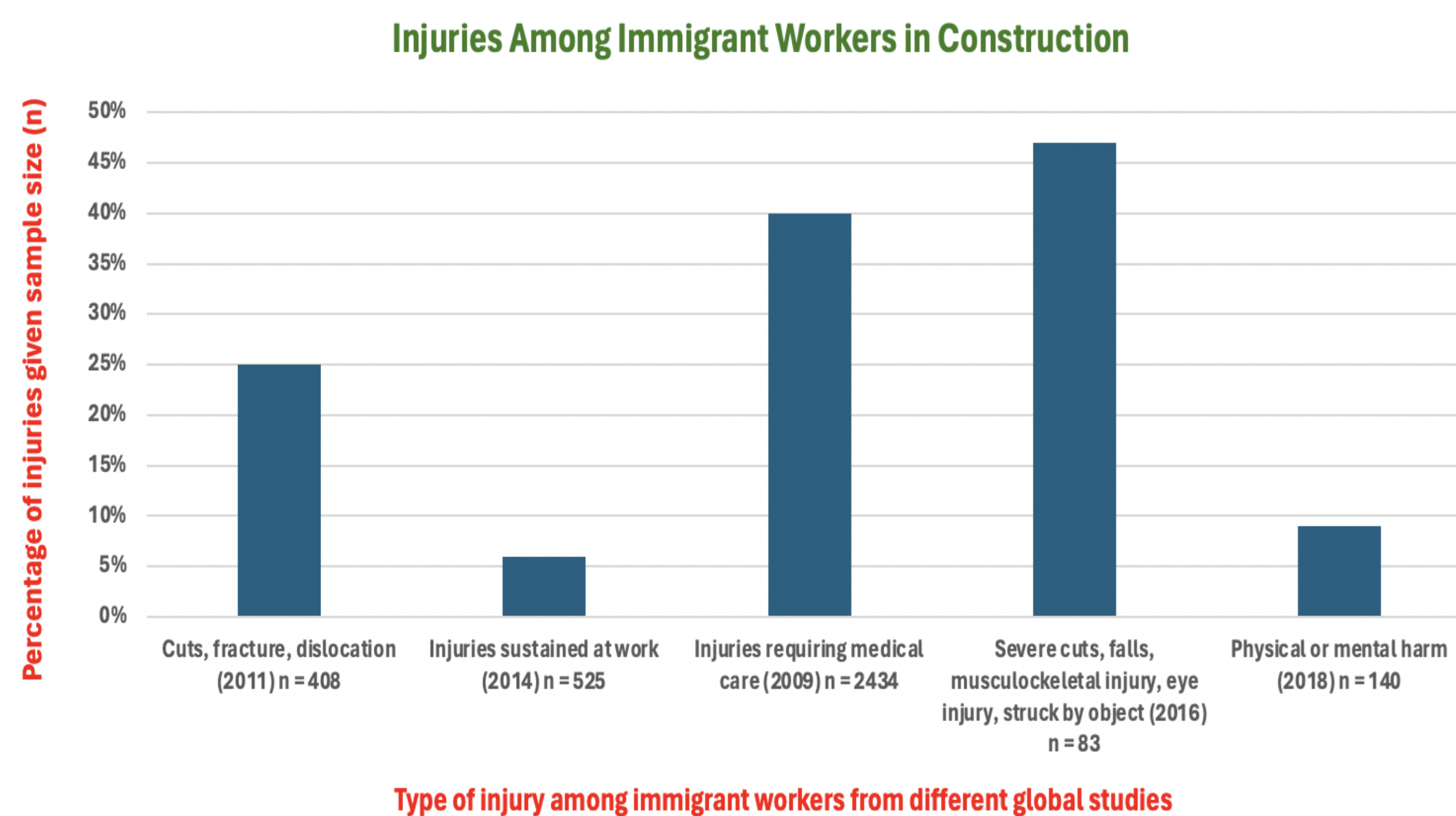
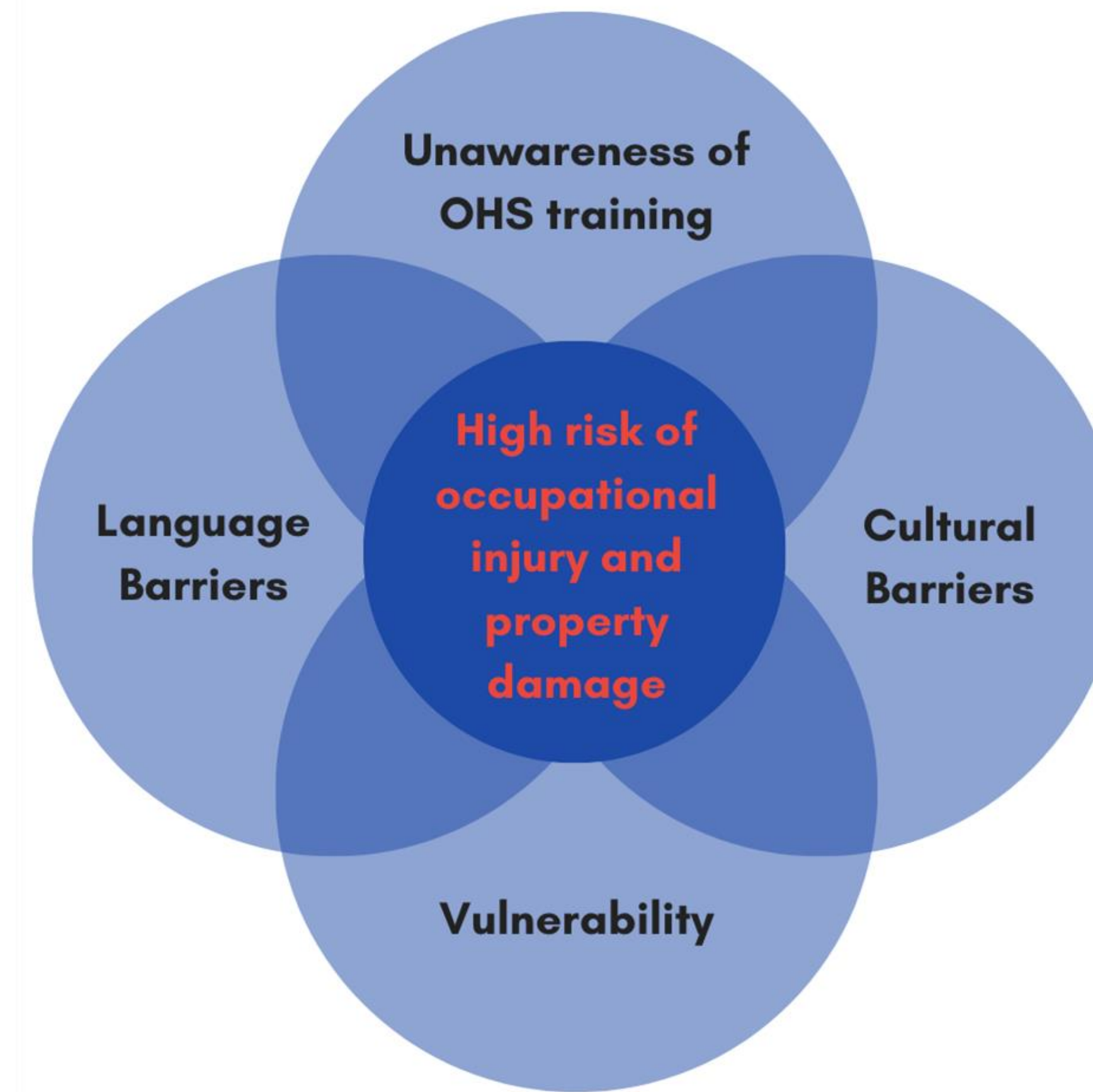


Figure 1: Prevalence of having at least one occupational accident or injury among international migrant construction workers from the systematic review by Hargreaves et al.⁶

2. LITERATURE REVIEW



The literature in the field of OHS of immigrant workers in Canada highlights four primary factors contributing to the increased risk of encountering work-related injuries and property damage:

- **Unawareness of OHS training:** Employers rarely provided the immigrant workers with formal job instruction, health and safety training or protective equipment as they only needed a laborer for the job³
- **Language barriers:** Language barriers not only cause limited understanding of provided OHS training but also lead to challenges in communicating with other coworkers and the employer. A limited understanding of OHS training results in higher chances of workplace injuries⁴
- **Cultural barriers:** Cultural differences among immigrant workers or immigrant workers and their employees could impact how groups of workers perceive, understand, adapt to and address work-related safety concerns⁴
- **Vulnerability:** Immigrant workers may not report OHS violations when faced with them. Their hesitancy may stem from various factors, such as the fear of losing their jobs, being under the overpowering influence of their employers, and the potential ramifications regarding their immigration status²



3. RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there a difference in Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) awareness levels between recent immigrant workers who have been living in Ontario for less than five years, established immigrant workers who have been living in Ontario for more than five years, and Canadian born or trained workers?

5. PROPOSED METHODS

- Quantitative approach – Cross-sectional study design
- The survey will be limited to adult construction workers in Ontario speaking one of the following languages: English, Turkish, or Portuguese
- The finalized survey will be translated and will be available both online and as a hardcopy
- Data analysis will be performed, which will include descriptive, bivariate, and multivariable analysis techniques to examine the link between residency duration and OHS awareness
- Effect size calculation and power analysis for sample sizing. Chi-square tests, ANOVA, and regression analysis will be performed to identify significant differences and adjusted for confounding variables

6. IMPACT

OHS knowledge and awareness of immigrant workers in Ontario stands to make a significant impact considering that immigrant workers account for almost 100 percent of Canada's labor force growth¹.

It is crucial to differentiate the OHS knowledge and awareness of a new immigrant versus an established immigrant, as it would provide the implementation of tailored safety training and education programs, ensuring both new and established immigrants receive the appropriate level of information and support.

Understanding the diverse backgrounds of immigrant workers promotes cultural sensitivity and inclusivity, creates a workplace where everyone feels valued and safe, enhances job satisfaction and productivity and can significantly reduce workplace accidents, especially among new immigrants unfamiliar with local safety standards.

7. REFERENCES

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