

## Media Company Grip Falls Down Empty Elevator Shaft

### SUMMARY

On the morning of July 27, 2020, a crew started filming a commercial at an unfinished nuclear power plant facility in Western Washington. The facility was part of a site that had been turned into a multi-purpose business park with offices, training centers, and unfinished facilities that were leased out to be used as filming locations. This facility has been used by many film crews over the years due to its unique visual characteristics.

The grip's job was to move a generator and fog machine and set it up at shooting locations ahead of the rest of the crew. Near the end of the day, the grip was seen moving the equipment. When the crew arrived at the next location, they noticed the grip was not there and assumed he was packing the equipment.

Shortly after 8:00 p.m., the crew wrapped up filming for the day. When they returned to their hotel, they realized the grip was missing.

Two crew members returned to the facility where they discovered the grip at the bottom of an empty elevator shaft after having suffered an 86-foot fall.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) investigators concluded that to protect their workers and themselves from similar hazards film industry employers should:

- Conduct a site safety assessment (SSA) before working in any structures or environments.
- Enforce safe work practices to protect workers from hazards identified in an SSA.
- Develop policies prohibiting workers from entering structures or environments before approval to enter is granted and directions are given about what to do when hazards are encountered.
- Train workers to identify and avoid hazardous areas and follow procedures for safely responding to hazards.

In addition, FACE recommends that facility owners and managers identify the unique hazards at that location and communicate them to facility users through written references and walk around tours, whether the user has previously been on the site or not.

**SHARP Publication # 52-50-2021\_summary.** The full version of this investigation report, along with the detailed recommendations and discussions section, can be found at: [http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/files/2021/52\\_50\\_2021\\_MediaGripFall.pdf](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/files/2021/52_50_2021_MediaGripFall.pdf)



Elevator shaft where grip fell with wooden guard on the floor that used to cover shaft opening.

The Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control (WA FACE) program is one of many workplace health and safety programs administered by the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries' Safety & Health & Research for Prevention (SHARP) program. It is a research program designed to identify and study fatal occupational injuries. Under a cooperative agreement with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 2U60OH008487), WA FACE collects information on occupational fatalities in WA State and targets specific types of fatalities for evaluation.

More about WA FACE can be found at: [www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face)