

# Fatality Narrative

## Carpenter Falls from Top Plate of House Wall\*

**Industry:** Framing contractors  
**Occupation:** Carpenter  
**Task:** Nailing wooden blocks between rafters  
**Type of Incident:** Fall

**Release Date:** July 29, 2005  
**Case No.:** 04WA07101  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-37-2005

On August 30, 2004, a carpenter was fatally injured when he fell 11 feet 7 inches from the top plate of a house under construction. The 45-year-old victim, an experienced carpenter, was employed by a framing contractor and was part of a crew framing a new single-family house. The victim had been working from an 8 foot stepladder where he was using a pneumatic nailer (nail gun) to nail wood pressure blocks in between rafters. He accidentally cracked a block and decided to repair it by nailing from above. The victim used the ladder to access the top plate where he stood on the 2 x 4 top plate and crouched to get in position to nail the next block. The victim then stood up, lost his balance and fell to the concrete floor below, where he received a fatal head injury.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Develop a fall protection work plan that includes the identification of hazards, fall prevention and protection methods, and the installation of protective systems.
- ! When workers are exposed to fall hazards of 10 feet or more, the employer must ensure that fall restraint, fall arrest, or a positioning system is used.
- When working at heights, employers should evaluate, choose/select the right equipment, such as staging, movable work platforms and ladders that are appropriate for accessing the work areas.
- If choosing a ladder(s), make sure to select the proper ladder(s) for the intended task.
- Never stand on the top or top step of a stepladder.
- When performing this type of work, consider different means of accessing the work such as the use of bracket scaffolds or mobile work platforms.
- ! Employees must be trained in the proper use of fall protection systems.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 66<sup>th</sup> out of 92 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2004, and was the 12<sup>th</sup> out of 17 construction-related fatalities.

---

*This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees in a timely manner of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State. We encourage you to consider the above information as you make safety decisions for or recommendations to your company or constituency. The information in this notice is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.*

Developed by the Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) and Washington Industrial Safety and Health Act (WISHA) Programs at the WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/FACE>.