

Fatality Narrative

Worker Falls 9 feet from Plank*

Industry: Roofing

Occupation: Construction laborer/temporary worker

Task: Stripping of ceramic tile from roof of single family residence

Type of Incident: Fall from Elevation

Release Date: June 13, 2002

Case No.: 02WA019

SHARP Report No.: 71-3-2002

On April 1, 2002, a worker was fatally injured during a residential roof tear-off when he fell from a plank used as a ramp that was placed between the roof and the side of a debris truck. On the morning of the incident the victim had been hired through a temporary help service to work for a roofing contractor. The job involved tearing off ceramic tiles from a single-family residence in preparation for putting on a new asphalt composite roof. A crew of six laborers and a supervisor had been working during the morning stripping tiles from the roof and hand carrying the tiles and debris in metal garbage cans from the roof to a truck, across a plank, where the debris was dumped. The plank was a 20-foot long by 14-inch wide commercially available ladder jack scaffolding plank. At its highest point, the plank was 11 feet from the ground. At the time of this incident, instead of using a garbage can, the victim was carrying an armload of debris across the plank to the truck when he fell 9 feet to the asphalt surface of a driveway below. He died two days later of head and neck injuries. It is unknown whether the victim had any experience or training in construction or roofing.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Employers are responsible for assessing hazards and implementing fall prevention/protection measures before starting and during the course of roofing work.
- Jobs should be designed to minimize the fall exposure. A chute could have been built to allow workers to dump material to ground level without having to walk across an elevated plank.
- ! When using ramps or walkways, provide guardrails where fall exposures exist. Be sure ramps or walkways have sufficient width and traction capability to allow safe use and that they are of sufficient strength to bear weight.
- ! Provide employees with fall hazard assessment training by a competent person.
- ! In situations with more than one party responsible for the employees, for example a construction company and a temporary help agency or a general contractor and sub-contractors, the party responsible for worker training and hazard assessment should be defined prior to the work being started.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 16th work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2002 and was the 3rd construction fatality of the year.

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. For more information, contact the Safety and Health Assessment and Research for Prevention (SHARP) Program, 1-888-667-4277, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/sharp/face>.