

Carpet Installer Dies After Falling from Window Opening *

Industry: Flooring contractors
Task: Unloading carpet rolls from box raised by forklift
Occupation: Carpet installer
Type of Incident: Fall

Release Date: August 6, 2012
Incident Date: November 12, 2009
Case No.: 09WA05101
SHARP Report No.: 71-112-2012

On November 12, 2009, a carpet installer died when he fell from the fourth floor window opening of a building. The 45-year-old victim had worked as a carpet layer for over 20 years. He was hired by a flooring contractor to install carpeting in a new hotel. The victim was unloading carpet rolls from a three-sided wooden box through the unfinished window opening. The box was raised to the window on a reach forklift. The window opening was approximately 5 feet wide by 5 feet high with a sill height of 26 inches. The 2x4 top rail had been removed in order to get the carpet through the window. Each roll weighed 80 lb. and stuck out about 30 inches from the work box. While attempting to unload a roll of carpet, the victim put one foot on the window sill and one foot on a roll of carpet. He then put both feet on the carpet roll, causing him to fall along with the carpet to the ground 32 feet below.



Three-sided skip box used to elevate carpet rolls to window opening.

Requirements

- Ensure that employees exposed to a hazard of falling 4 feet or more in height from a wall opening are protected by an approved fall protection system. See WAC 296-155-505(5)(a).
- Develop and implement a written fall protection work plan including each area where employees are assigned and where fall hazards of 10 feet or more exist. See WAC 296-155-24505(1).
- Train employees to recognize and avoid fall hazards. See WAC 296-155-100 and 296-155-24505(4).

Recommendations

- Use a safe and approved method to elevate, handle, and deliver materials at elevation.
- If possible, arrange to use the building's elevator when moving construction materials to upper floors.
- Conduct a task hazard analysis to identify potential hazards and determine how to address them so that the task can be completed safely.

State Wide Statistics: This was number 48 out of 65 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2009, and was number 5 out of 7 construction-related fatalities.

**This bulletin was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and 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 WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part 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.

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