

Operating Engineer Struck by Concrete Slab*

Industry: Electrical contractors
Task: Removing controlled density fill from electrical vault
Occupation: Operating engineer
Type of Incident: Struck by falling object

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Incident Date: September 4, 2008
Case No.: 08WA04301
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On September 4, 2008, an operating engineer died after being struck by a concrete slab. The 28-year-old victim was employed for seven years by an electrical contractor. The victim and a co-worker were removing controlled density fill, a type of concrete, from an electrical vault. The vault was in an excavation where the two workers were working inside a shield box. As they were chipping the controlled density fill, a 16' x 3' section broke loose and fell on them, pinning them against the shield box. One worker was able to free himself and assist with the rescue of the victim, who was taken to a hospital, where he died of blunt force injuries.



Requirements

- An engineering survey should be conducted before demolition work begins on any structure. See [WAC 296-155-775](#)
- A competent person should oversee the demolition of any structure and ensure that workers are protected. See [WAC 269-155-775](#)
- Employers must ensure that workers in trenches are protected from being struck by falling objects. See [WAC 296-155-655](#)
- Protective systems must be set up correctly and should be inspected by a competent person who should also assess for potential hazardous conditions. See [WAC 296-155-655](#)

Recommendations

- Conduct a hazard analysis that considers the potential severity and likelihood of an event.
- Develop practical written safe work procedures and plan the job before starting work.
- Never position yourself between fixed objects and objects that have the potential to fall.

State Wide Statistics: This was number 44 out of 72 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2008, and was number 12 out of 18 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.*

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