

# Fatality Narrative

## Specialty Trade Contractor Falls from Ladder \*

**Industry:** Specialty trade contractor  
**Occupation:** Owner  
**Task:** Descending ladder from roof  
**Type of Incident:** Fall from ladder

**Release Date:** October 31, 2005  
**Case No.:** 04WA09401  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-40-2005

On October 21, 2004, a contractor was fatally injured when he fell 12 feet from a ladder. The 49-year-old contractor was a part owner of a construction business that built residential decks, installed gutters, handrails, and other building exterior work. The victim was descending from the roof of a single-family residence by way of an extension ladder that was leaned against the building. As he was accessing the ladder from the rooftop, the ladder slid sideways and he fell 12 feet to the ground. He sustained multiple injuries and was taken to a hospital where he was treated. The victim was released from the hospital two days later and returned home where he died suddenly from injury complications.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! When setting up a straight ladder, make sure the ladder is placed on a firm, level surface and set at a ratio of 4:1 or a 75-degree pitch. The greater the deviation from this ratio, the more likely the ladder will slip at its base.
- ! When using a ladder to access an upper landing, the ladder must be secured at the top and bottom of ladder.
- ! Ladders must extend at least 3 feet above the upper landing surface.
- ! When descending or ascending a ladder, the user shall face the ladder.
- ! Assure that the ladder is placed on a firm and level foundation.
- ! Make sure ladder users are trained in safe ladder usage.
- ! Do not place ladders in traffic areas, passageways, or in front of doorways.
- Do not step on or put any weight on ladder rungs or parts of the ladder that are above the roof line or upper landing surface when ascending or descending. The 3 feet of ladder extending above the upper landing surface or roof is to be used for balance only while ascending or descending.
- Do not rush while on a ladder.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 80<sup>th</sup> out of 92 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2004, and was the 16<sup>th</sup> out of 17 construction-related fatalities.

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*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.*

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