

# Fatality Narrative

## Granite Installer Struck by Falling Granite Slabs \*

**Industry:** New multifamily housing construction

**Occupation:** Granite installer/laborer

**Task:** Loading granite slabs on to forklift

**Type of Incident:** Struck by

**Release Date:** January 31, 2005

**Case No.:** 04WA03101

**SHARP Report No.:** 71-31-2005

On May 10, 2004, a worker was struck by slabs of granite that fell while being moved. The victim was employed by a general contractor to work as a granite installer/construction laborer at a condominium construction site. The victim and a forklift operator were pushing a drywall cart loaded with five slabs of granite onto the forks of a heavy duty forklift, just prior to the incident. The 47" x 53" – 3/4" thick granite slabs, each weighing about 200 lbs, were to be used as countertops and flooring in the five-story building. The forklift was positioned on an incline with the forks pointing toward the downhill side. Once the cart was set on the forklift's forks, the victim pushed against the slabs to keep them upright while the other worker went to get some rope to secure the slabs to the cart. While the worker was trying to steady the slabs, they began to slide toward the victim. He slipped and fell, landing face-down. The granite slabs slid off the cart, striking the worker's head and upper body. The victim was transported to a hospital where he was pronounced dead as a result of blunt force injury to the head and chest.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- Conduct a job hazard analysis for all work activities to identify hazards and develop pro-active methods to address the hazards.
- ! Employees must be trained in proper material handling procedures to include specific training in the safe handling, moving, storage, and transport of granite slabs or other heavy materials.
- ! Stabilize all loads before moving.
- Use slab carts or slab racks designed for both forklift use and job site transport, to help ensure a stable load and make transfer of a fully loaded cart to a forklift easier and safer.
- Use tie-downs to secure slabs to the carts or racks. The granite was not secured to the cart before moving it onto the forklift
- When transferring or moving granite slabs, try to ensure that material carts and the forklifts are on as level a surface as possible.
- When moving and transporting granite slabs and similar materials, employees should never put themselves in a position of risk (ie. downhill or below potentially unsecured material).

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 31<sup>st</sup> out of 92 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2004, and was the 6<sup>th</sup> out of 17 construction-related fatalities during the year.

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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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