

Fatality Narrative

Ironworker Falls Through Roof Opening*

Industry: Steel erection

Occupation: Ironworker

Task: Assisting with landing a crane load of prefabricated metal framing on roof

Type of Incident: Fall through roof opening

Release Date: August 29, 2005

Case No.: 04WA07001

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On August 30, 2004, an ironworker was killed when he fell 29 feet through an unguarded roof opening. The 35-year-old victim was employed by a construction company that performs work on steel-framed structures. The company was a subcontractor at a building site where a college building was being constructed. The victim had been working at the site for about six weeks. On the morning of the incident, the victim and two other workers were on the building's roof landing a steel framed wind-brace with a crane. One worker acted as a signal person for the crane operator; the other two workers, including the victim, were handling the load and walking it toward the landing area. The victim fell through an unprotected 32"x 60" opening cut in the roof's metal form decking and landed on a concrete slab 29 feet below.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- Employers, as part of their regular routine, should conduct a job-site hazard assessment and develop a hazard prevention plan to control and eliminate hazards found in the assessment.
- ! Do not cut metal decking or floor openings until just immediately prior to the installation of the equipment or structure that will occupy that opening.
- ! If the openings are not immediately going to be used, cover the openings with a labeled floor hole cover of adequate strength, or guard with a temporary standard railing and toe boards.
- ! Employers must implement and enforce the use of fall protection systems on all sites where employees are exposed to falls from elevation.
- ! Employers must develop a fall protection work plan when employees are assigned to work in areas where fall hazards of 10 feet or more exist.
- ! The fall protection plan must identify each fall hazard and the type of protection to be used.
- ! All employees exposed to fall hazards must be trained in all elements of the fall protection work plan.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 67th out of 92 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2004, and was the 13th out of 17 construction-related fatalities.

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. The FACE Program is supported 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, <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/FACE>.