

Fatality Narrative

Apprentice Carpenter Struck by Plywood Sheets*

Industry: Construction
Occupation: Apprentice carpenter
Task: Laying plywood sheeting on roof
Type of Incident: Struck by/fall

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On November 11, 2003, an apprentice carpenter working on a roof was struck by plywood sheets when a bunk failed. This caused the victim to fall to the ground where a cascade of the plywood sheets struck him. The 21-year-old, second-year apprentice was employed by a construction company to work on a single-story building to be used as an annex to a county sheriff's office. The victim was standing on the top plate of the building's exterior wall getting ready to lay plywood sheeting on the roof trusses. He was not using fall protection. He reached for a sheet of 5/8 inch 4' x 8' plywood from the 46-sheet stack of plywood being held in place by two wood bunks nailed to the 3/12-pitch roof trusses. The movement of the plywood caused one of the bunks to collapse. The plywood sheets began to slide toward the victim and pushed him off the top plate causing him to fall 11 feet to the ground where he landed on his back. Twenty-nine sheets of plywood cascaded down, many of them edgewise, onto his chest and body. First aid was performed on the victim, before he was transported to a hospital, where he later died.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Employers are responsible for assessing hazards and implementing fall prevention/protection measures before starting and during the course of roofing work.
- ! Employers must ensure that workers exposed to a fall of ten feet or more use fall protection.
- ! Employers must train workers to recognize fall hazards and know the correct procedures for fall protection, and handling and storing materials.
- ! A fall protection work plan must be developed and implemented where a fall hazard of 10 feet or more exists that includes the correct procedures for storing and handling materials.
- ! Storage bunks must be interlocked, braced, or secured to prevent collapse.
- ! Bunks and roof structures cannot be loaded beyond design limits.
- Material may be divided into two or more stacks to reduce loads on the supporting structures.
- Consider using a forklift to position and hold materials while working from roofs.
- Avoid standing below material stored on an incline.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 66th out of 74 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2003, and was the 11th construction-related fatality of the year.

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. 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>.