

# Fatality Narrative

## Worker Falls from Roof Through Skylight Opening\*

**Industry:** Residential Construction

**Release Date:** October 1, 2003

**Occupation:** Construction worker

**Case No.:** 02WA071

**Task:** Placing plastic sheeting over skylight openings

**SHARP Report No.:** 71-14-2002

**Type of Incident:** Fall

On November 22, 2002, a construction worker fell from a roof through an unguarded skylight opening and was fatally injured. The victim was a 67-year-old male. He was working for a construction contractor who was building an addition to a house. He went on to the unfinished roof to put plastic sheeting over several skylight openings so that rain would not get into the rooms below. He went to staple the plastic sheeting over a skylight opening when he fell and landed on the concrete floor 9 feet 10 inches below. He suffered severe injuries and was transported to a hospital where he died 10 days later.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! During construction, place temporary standard guardrails around skylight openings or secured covers that are capable of supporting a maximum potential load of 800 pounds (i.e., a 200 pound person with a safety factor of 4).
- ! Appropriate fall protection must be provided by employers and used by all persons working on roofs.
- The employer should conduct a job site hazard assessment and develop a hazard prevention plan to control and eliminate the hazards found in the assessment.
- ! Develop a fall protection plan that includes the identification of hazards, fall prevention and protection methods, and the installation of protective systems.
- ! All employees must be trained in all the elements of the fall protection plan including hazards related to skylights, floor, roof, and wall openings.
- ! When covers are used to protect roof openings, they must be properly secured and labeled to identify the opening being covered.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 71<sup>st</sup> work-related fatality in Washington State during the year 2002 and was the 5<sup>th</sup> fatal fall from elevation in construction of 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.*

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/sharp/face>.