

# Fatality Narrative

## Carpenter Falls from Stepladder\*

**Industry:** Framing contractors  
**Occupation:** Framer/carpenter  
**Task:** Installing beam  
**Type of Incident:** Fall from ladder

**Release Date:** May 19, 2005  
**Case No.:** 04WA04901  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-35-2005

On June 24, 2004, a carpenter died when he fell from a stepladder. The 44-year-old victim was an experienced carpenter and framer. He was employed by a framing contractor and was part of a crew framing a bed and breakfast establishment. The victim and a foreman were each climbing up 8 foot fiberglass stepladders attempting to install a wooden beam (6"x10"x16', weighing about 205 lb), on two posts. They were climbing the stepladders while holding the wooden beam with one hand and resting it on their shoulders. The beam was to be set on posts that were about 11 feet, 9 inches tall and spaced about 15 feet apart. The victim was about to place his end of the beam on the post when he fell from the stepladder. His head struck the concrete patio below and he subsequently died of head injuries from the fall. An investigation determined that the stepladders used by the contractor employees, were overloaded beyond the manufacturer's rated capacity, and that the two employees were standing on the top steps of the ladders.

### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- Use appropriate methods and systems for hoisting construction materials such as crank lifts or motorized equipment. For example, after this incident the employer began using scaffold systems to hoist beams.
- ! Train employees in appropriate and safe use of ladders.
- ! Do not exceed ladder manufacturers' rated load capacity.
- ! Use ladders according to manufacturers' specifications.
- ! Do not stand on the top two steps of stepladder.
- ! Do not carry objects that can interfere with the use of your hands while climbing a ladder.
- Maintain 3-points of contact with a ladder while climbing.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 45<sup>th</sup> out of 93 work-related fatalities in Washington State during the year 2004, and was the 9<sup>th</sup> out of 17 construction-related fatalities during 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. 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>.