

Fatality Narrative

Journeyman Carpenter Struck by Falling Wall Section *

Industry: Framing contractors
Occupation: Journeyman carpenter
Task: Raising wall section
Type of Incident: Struck by

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On December 30, 2005, a journeyman carpenter was killed during the raising of a wall section. The 39-year-old victim had 16 years experience as a journeyman carpenter and had worked with his current employer for 5 months. The victim was employed by a framing contractor and was working at a commercial building construction site. Seven workers, including the victim, were to assist in the raising of a sheeted wood frame exterior wall section measuring 38 feet 6 inches by 10 feet 7 inches. The plan was to raise the wall by attaching a nylon sling to a ½-inch by 8-inch eye bolt secured to the wall's top plate as a "pick point." The sling would then be attached to the fork of a forklift. The wall was to be raised and secured in an upright position with seven workers helping to stabilize it. When the wall was raised to about 75% of vertical, the eye bolt failed and the wall fell back toward the raising crew. Five workers escaped to safety and two workers were struck by the wall. One worker hit by the wall suffered a broken leg and the other died as a result of the incident. The failed eye bolt's maximum load capacity, as rated by the manufacturer, was 300 lbs. The wall section was calculated to weigh 1,910 lbs.

Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by law)

- ! Conduct "pre-lift" meetings to determine the safest method for raising walls.
- ! Determine the weight of a wall before raising it.
- ! Use a competent person to supervise the lifting operation.
- ! Know and work within the safe working load (SWL) of all rigging components.
- ! Select appropriate rigging and rigging methods to assure a safe lift.
- ! Use raising props, wall jacks, and base plate stops to keep wall sections from falling on workers.
- ! Use cranes or forklifts that are appropriate and are of adequate size and capacity to lift wall sections.
- Only necessary personnel should be exposed while the wall is being raised, in case the wall section falls. Escape routes should be planned before the lift for any workers exposed.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 79th out of 80 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2005, and was the 9th out of 9 construction-related fatalities.

This bulletin was developed at the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries to alert employers and employees 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) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) 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/>.



Photo: This picture shows the fallen wall and the forklift with the attached nylon strap after the incident.

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