

# Fatality Narrative

## Pipe Layer/Laborer Falls into Catch Basin\*

**Industry:** Water and sewer line structures construction  
**Occupation:** Pipe layer/Laborer  
**Task:** Repairing a broken concrete section of a stormwater catch basin  
**Type of Incident:** Fall into concrete structure

**Release Date:** September 13, 2007  
**Case No.:** 06WA06701  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-61-2007

On September 28, 2006, a pipe layer/laborer was fatally injured when he fell into a concrete catch basin. The 49-year-old victim, a member of the Laborers' International Union of North America, had worked in the construction industry for 25 years, of which the last 1 ½ years were with his current employer, a company that installs underground utilities such as water and sewer lines and other structures. On the day of the incident, the victim was assigned the task of repairing a broken section of a concrete stormwater catch basin. The catch basin was erected in a 14 ft. deep trench excavation. The 84" type-2 catch basin was 8 ft. 8 inches high and was set on a 1 ft. base. A protective shield 8 ft. tall x 10 ft. wide x 10 ft. long was set in the excavation surrounding the catch basin. The victim attempted to access the basin to begin the repair work by stepping down from the edge of the excavation onto the protective shielding and then onto the concrete edge of the catch basin. As he stepped down, onto the edge of the catch basin, he lost his footing and fell head first into the basin, landing 9 ft. below. He was taken to a hospital where he died two days later of injuries to his head and spine.



### Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! Any worker on a structure in an excavation exposed to a fall hazard greater than 10 feet must be provided fall protection.
- ! Establish safe and suitable access and egress to work areas within the construction site.
- ! Identify potential fall hazards prior to each project and develop a protection plan to address any hazards.
- Conduct daily walk-arounds and look for additional hazards. Pay special attention to non-routine tasks. Construction sites are dynamic and situations are always changing.
- Set up platforms, ramps, stairways, or scaffolds to provide access over uneven terrain and to help manage fall hazards.
- Train all workers regarding elements of construction site fall hazards and especially hazards that are unique to the site. Emphasize that all workers need to use designated access/egress points for safe travel within the worksite.

**State Wide Statistics:** This was the 47<sup>th</sup> out of 81 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2006, and was the 18<sup>th</sup> out of 23 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. 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.*

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