

Fatality Narrative

Roofer Falls from Extension Ladder When it Collapses*

Industry: Roofing contractors
Occupation: Roofer
Task: Descending ladder from roof
Type of Incident: Fall

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On June 5, 2007, a roofer received fatal injuries after a fall from a ladder. The 20-year-old victim worked for a roofing contractor and had two years experience in this trade. On the incident day, the victim was working with a crew at a condominium complex where they were re-roofing several units. The victim and other crew members completed roofing one condominium unit and moved on to work on the roof of another unit. The victim returned to retrieve tools from the first unit's roof. He accessed the roof by climbing up a 32-foot extension ladder. Before descending the ladder, the victim used his cell phone to ask a coworker to hold the ladder for him. The coworker arrived and held the ladder. The roof line where the ladder was positioned was 25 feet above ground level. The ladder was not extended, so the victim before he began to climb down, pulled the ladder up higher, causing it to extend a bit so that about one rung of the ladder was above the roof line. The victim, holding a drill case in one hand, began to descend the ladder, when at the same moment the ladder telescoped down slightly (the rung locks were not fully engaged) causing the victim to fall about 25 feet to an asphalt surface below. The victim was taken to a hospital, where he died the next day of blunt head and chest trauma.



Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! Employers are responsible for training employees to recognize portable ladder fall hazards and how to minimize or eliminate these hazards.
- ! Position ladders so that side rails extend at least 3 feet above the landing.
- ! Secure ladders at top and bottom to prevent slipping.
- ! Have both hands free to hold on to ladder.
- ! Use a hoist or other means than hand carrying to bring materials and tools up to or down from a roof.
- Always have a 3-point contact (such as, one hand and two feet).

State Wide Statistics: This was the 33rd out of 80 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2007, and was the 7th out of 16 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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