

Fatality Narrative

Painter Killed When Scissor Lift Tips Over*

Industry: Painting contractors
Occupation: Painter
Task: Preparing to pressure wash building exterior
Type of Incident: Fall/scissor lift tip over

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On April 21, 2007, a painter received fatal injuries when an extended scissor lift tipped over. The 51-year-old victim, a painter, had 10 years experience in the painting industry and was employed by a painting contractor. The victim and another worker were assigned by their employer to a job site where they were to pressure wash and clean the brick exterior of a two-story bank building. The two workers arrived at the job site at about 1:00 pm and used pressure washing equipment and a scissor lift elevating work platform to wash the building exterior. About two hours after cleaning the north side of the building, they moved the equipment to the building's east side. The scissor lift was positioned on the surface of an asphalt parking lot adjacent to and sloping away from the building. The victim was working from the platform of the scissor lift which was extended to about 17 feet above the ground. The scissor lift tipped-over, ejecting the victim who suffered fatal injuries after hitting the pavement. As the incident was unobserved, it is unclear what caused the tip-over. What is clear from the incident investigation is the scissor lift operator was not trained in the use of this equipment; the lift was positioned parallel to the building on the sloping parking lot surface; and the lift's damaged outriggers were not being used.



Requirements/Recommendations

(! Indicates items required by code)

- ! Employers must ensure that all elevating work platform operators, including scissor lift, are properly trained in the safe use of the equipment and are familiar with the manufacturer's operation and maintenance guidelines.
- ! Operators should survey the work area before and during use of an elevating work platform at a work site to ensure there are no tip-over hazards present, such as slopes, holes, drop-offs, bumps, or uneven surfaces in the travel path of the lift.
- ! Ensure that lifts are regularly inspected and maintained and that damaged equipment is repaired so it meets or exceeds the manufacturer's specifications for safe operation.
- ! Before the work platform is elevated, be sure that outriggers or stabilizers are used as required by the manufacturer.
- Do not drive with the work platform elevated, unless the manufacturing states that you can.

State Wide Statistics: This was the 24th out of 80 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2007, and was the 4th 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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