



# FATALITY NARRATIVE

## Laborer Crushed Under House \*

**Industry:** Residential remodelers  
**Task:** Lowering jacks under house  
**Occupation:** Laborer  
**Type of Incident:** Struck by / Crushed

**Release Date:** June 28, 2011  
**Incident Date:** December 12, 2009  
**Case No.:** 09WA05901  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-102-2011

On November 12, 2009, a laborer was crushed under a house when bracing failed while jacks were being used to lower the house. The 57-year-old victim was hired as a laborer and it was his second day on the job. His employer was a small company that built new residences and did remodeling, but had no expertise in moving structures. The victim was part of a five man crew working to lower the house by five feet. During the lowering process the employer used an unorthodox method, supporting the house with several screw jacks and wood columns, bracing the columns to prevent lateral movement. The victim and four other employees were beneath the house lowering the jacks when the bracing failed. The house dropped 20 inches and shifted laterally six feet. Four workers escaped unharmed, but the victim was pinned between two pieces of lumber and the floor joists of the house's deck. He died at the scene.



Incident scene showing house after bracing collapsed during lowering of structure.

### Requirements

- ! Ensure that structures cannot shift or collapse when being moved or temporarily held in position. See [WAC 296-155-770](#).
- ! Correctly calculate weights to be moved and ensure equipment used provides a safety factor of five. See [WAC 296-155-770](#).
- ! Never exceed the jack manufacturer's rated capacity. The capacity must be clearly marked on all jacks. See [WAC 296-155-375](#).

### Recommendations

- ü Before moving any structure, employers should consult or hire trained and experienced structure movers to assess the worksite to ensure proper procedures are used.
- ü Use hydraulic jack systems to raise and lower structures and control jacks from a point that is not under the structure being moved.
- ü Use appropriate bracing and cribbing along with hydraulic jacks to distribute weight and stabilize structure.
- ü Employers should plan the positioning and movements of employees to eliminate the hazard of being struck or crushed.
- ü Train employees to identify crushing and struck by hazards and how to safely move structures, such as houses.

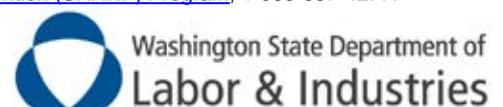
**State Wide Statistics:** This was number 59 out of 65 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2009, and was number 6 out of 7 construction-related fatalities.

*\*This bulletin was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and 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 WA State [Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation \(FACE\) Program](#) and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), [WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries](#). The FACE Program is supported in part 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.



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