

Roofing Foreman Falls 19 Feet from Extension Ladder

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-185-2019s

REPORT DATE: August 7, 2019

INCIDENT DATE: July 15, 2017

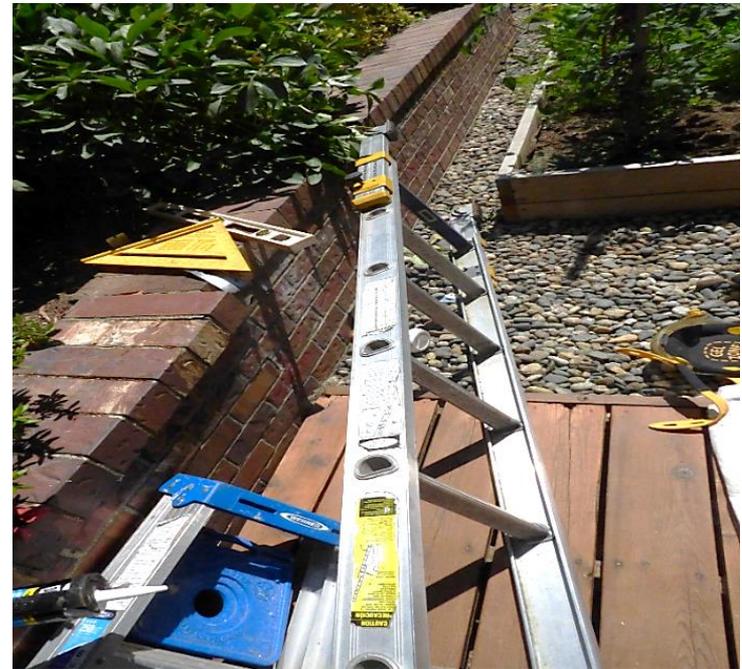
VICTIM: 43 years old

INDUSTRY: Roofing contractors

OCCUPATION: Foreman/Roofer

SCENE: Two-story, single family residence

EVENT TYPE: Fall



A 43-year-old roofing foreman died when he fell 19 feet from an extension ladder.

The foreman worked for a roofing contractor who occasionally did siding repair. He had overseen the company's projects for five years.

The foreman and a company roofer were replacing siding on the wood chimney chase of a two-story house.

The roofer used a 24-foot extension ladder to access the roof at the rear of the house. The foreman then moved the ladder to the side of the house.

He planned to place a fascia board on the upper part of the chase while standing on the ladder, with the roofer's help.

To do this he placed the base of the ladder between two raised garden beds and leaned the ladder against the chimney chase. This created a 65-degree angle, lower than a safe 75-degree angle. The ladder would have been nearly vertical if he had placed it on the other side of the garden bed.

He did not secure the ladder from movement at the bottom, or secure it at the top once he climbed up it.

The roofer questioned him about the safety of the ladder setup, but the foreman replied it would be okay because the job would not take long.

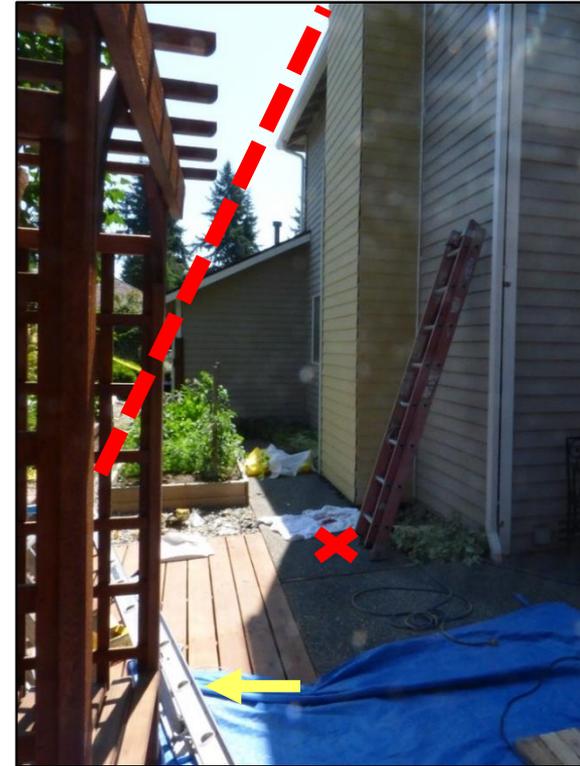
From the roof, the roofer helped the foreman hold the board in place. The board was about 25 feet above the ground.

Standing either on the second or third rung from the top of the ladder, the foreman used a drill to put a screw into the board.

As he leaned to his right to put in another screw, the ladder slid sideways and he fell with it, landing 19 feet below on a concrete walkway. He died from multiple blunt force injuries.



Photo 1. Base section of the ladder showing where it was set up behind a wood-framed garden bed (shown by “X”) and leaned against a house chimney chase at a 65- degree angle.



Photos 2 and 3. Two views of the incident scene showing the approximate position of the ladder where the foreman placed it against the chimney chase. The “X” indicates where the foreman landed after falling 19 feet from the 24-foot extension ladder. The yellow arrow indicates where the ladder landed.

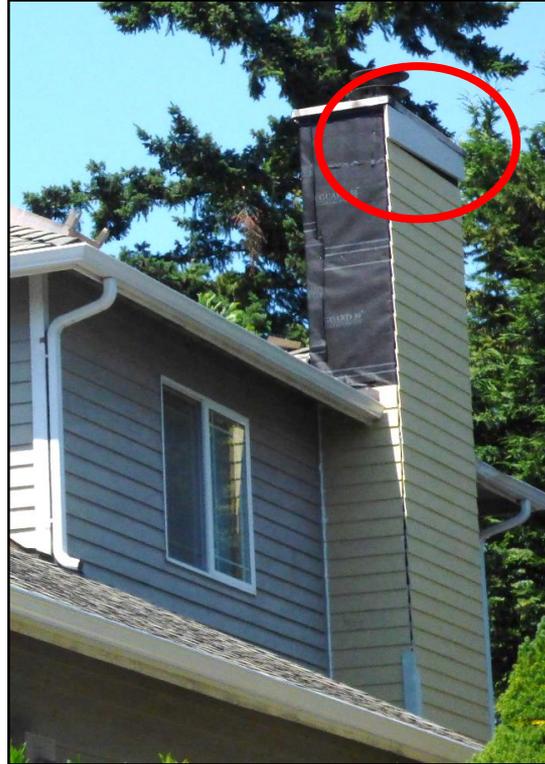


Photo 4. The foreman was working from an extension ladder leaned against the chimney chase, using a drill to install a fascia board (indicated by circle). When he reached to his right to put in a second screw, the unsecured ladder slid sideways and he fell.

Requirements

- Secure the ladder at the top and bottom when working from it. See [WAC 296-876-40040\(2\)](#)
- Set up non-self-supporting ladders at a safe angle. The ladder is set at the proper angle when the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is approximately one-quarter the working length of the ladder. See [WAC 296-876-40020\(1\)](#)

Recommendations

- Keep your body centered between the ladder's side rails. Do not overreach.
- Determine whether you can do a task safely using a ladder. If not, then use a safer alternative.

Remember, even if it “will just take a minute,” using a ladder unsafely is always dangerous!

Recommendations

- Set ladders at a 75-degree angle to ensure the bottom of the ladder does not slide out, and so that the user is able to maintain their balance.
- Never work from the top three rungs of a straight, single, or extension ladder.

Resources

- Reducing Falls in Construction: Safe Use of Extension Ladders, OSHA Fact Sheet.

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3660.pdf>

- NIOSH Ladder Safety App.

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html>

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.

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