

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-185-2019

REPORT DATE:

August 7, 2019

INCIDENT DATE:

July 15, 2017

VICTIM:

43 years old

INDUSTRY:

Roofing contractors

OCCUPATION:

Roofer/Foreman

SCENE:

Two-story, single-family residence

EVENT TYPE:

Fall



Fascia board (circled) that the foreman was installing when his unsecured ladder slid sideways and he fell.

[For a slideshow version, click here.](#)



This narrative is an alert about the tragic loss of life of a worker and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the fatality. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (WA FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The WA FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/FACE.

Roofing Foreman Falls 19 Feet from Extension Ladder

SUMMARY

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.

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

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

- 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!
- 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. www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3660.pdf

NIOSH Ladder Safety App. www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html



Base section of ladder and location it was set up (X) and leaned against the chimney chase at a 65-degree angle.