WASHINGTON State FACE Program
Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation

CONSTRUCTION FATALITY NARRATIVE

Framer Falls 8 Feet from Rim Joist

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:
71-264-2025

REPORT DATE:
March 17, 2025

INCIDENT DATE:
July 15, 2022

WORKER:
44 years old

INDUSTRY:
Siding Contractors

OCCUPATION:
Construction Framer

SCENE:
H-2A housing construction site

EVENT TYPE:
Fall from elevation

Circle shows area where framer fell.

For a slideshow version, click here.

SUMMARY

A 44-year-old experienced framer fell eight feet from a rim joist while working on a wall. He worked for his employer, a residential contractor, for five years.

The framer was with a co-worker removing previously installed second-level floor joists to relocate an inside kitchen wall that was framed in the wrong place. After finishing his task, he went to an outside wall where his co-worker was working. He sat down on a rim joist to wait. The joist was eight feet above the floor decking and had a window opening just below it. He was straddling the joist to support himself above the opening. He then leaned to the inside of the wall and lost balance. Unable to regain balance due to the opening, he fell headfirst to the floor decking below.

Framer fell from rim joist (x) above window opening to floor deck.

His co-worker saw him fall, called 911, and began CPR. When first responders arrived, he was breathing but unresponsive. He was then airlifted to the hospital and placed on life support. He died five days later.

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The framer fell from an inside wall height of eight feet, three-quarters inches. The fall hazard to the outside of the wall was nine feet, nine and three-quarters inches. Fall protection was not used because workers were under the 10-foot trigger height for fall protection requirements while installing structural members.
- The framer attended weekly safety meetings where fall protection was a recurring main topic.
- The employer had a written accident prevention program (APP) with a fall protection plan.

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Maintain conditions within the workplace that will not endanger the health, safety or welfare of employees. See WAC 296-800-11005

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded, that to help prevent similar occurrences employers, should:

- When workers must walk on top plates, joists, rafters, trusses, beams or other similar structural members, provide fall protection by using scaffolding, aerial lifts, edge protection platforms, guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall protection systems. Train workers to use these methods and equipment properly and periodically evaluate their fall protection knowledge and skills.
- Arrive on-site before work begins or appoint a supervisor to jointly conduct a site hazard assessment with workers to identify fall hazards and develop fall protection solutions.
- During the pre-job safety meeting, review the site hazard assessment and discuss workers' responsibilities to use fall protection and follow fall prevention safe work practices.

RESOURCES

Falls (From Heights) safety resources – Washington State Dept. of Labor & Industries

SHARP Safety & Health Assessment & Research for Prevention

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the injury. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (WA FACE) and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. WA FACE 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-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.