

## Roofer Falls 45 Feet through Skylight

### INCIDENT FACTS

**REPORT #:** 71-266-2025s

**REPORT DATE:** May 1, 2025

**INCIDENT DATE:** May 16, 2022

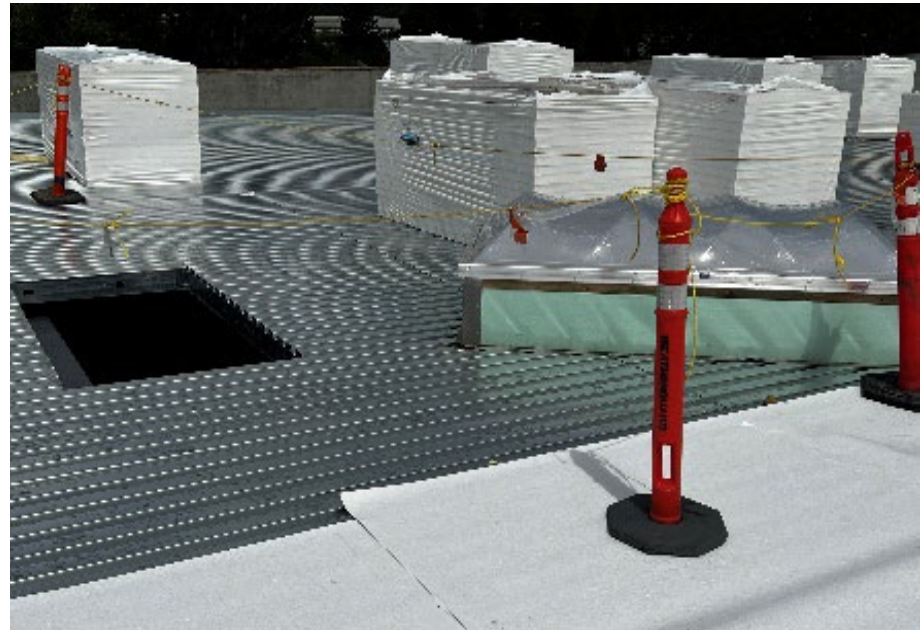
**WORKER:** 29 years old

**INDUSTRY:** Roofing Contractors

**OCCUPATION:** Roofer

**SCENE:** Industrial building construction site

**EVENT TYPE:** Fall from elevation



# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



A 29-year-old roofer fell 45 feet through a hole in a roof while installing skylights. He worked for his employer, a residential and light commercial roofing contractor, for 16 months.

He was on a crew installing roofing insulation and skylights on a large industrial building under construction. Multiple contractors were hired for the project, which involved installing 77 skylights. Another contractor's framing crew had just cut a hole from a boom lift underneath the roof deck. They then hand signaled the roofers to carry a skylight lid to cover a hole.

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



They selected an unsecured, approximately four-foot wide by eight-foot long lid and lifted it at opposite ends with the coworker holding the front. They took a half step forward when the coworker heard the roofer's end drop. He looked back and did not see the roofer, realizing he had fallen through a hole they did not know was under the lid.

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



The coworker alerted his foreman and they ran downstairs. They found the roofer on his back, seriously injured and unresponsive where he landed on gravel after falling 45 feet. Several workers inside saw him fall, called 911, and began CPR. First responders soon arrived but could not save his life.

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



Following the incident, investigators found:

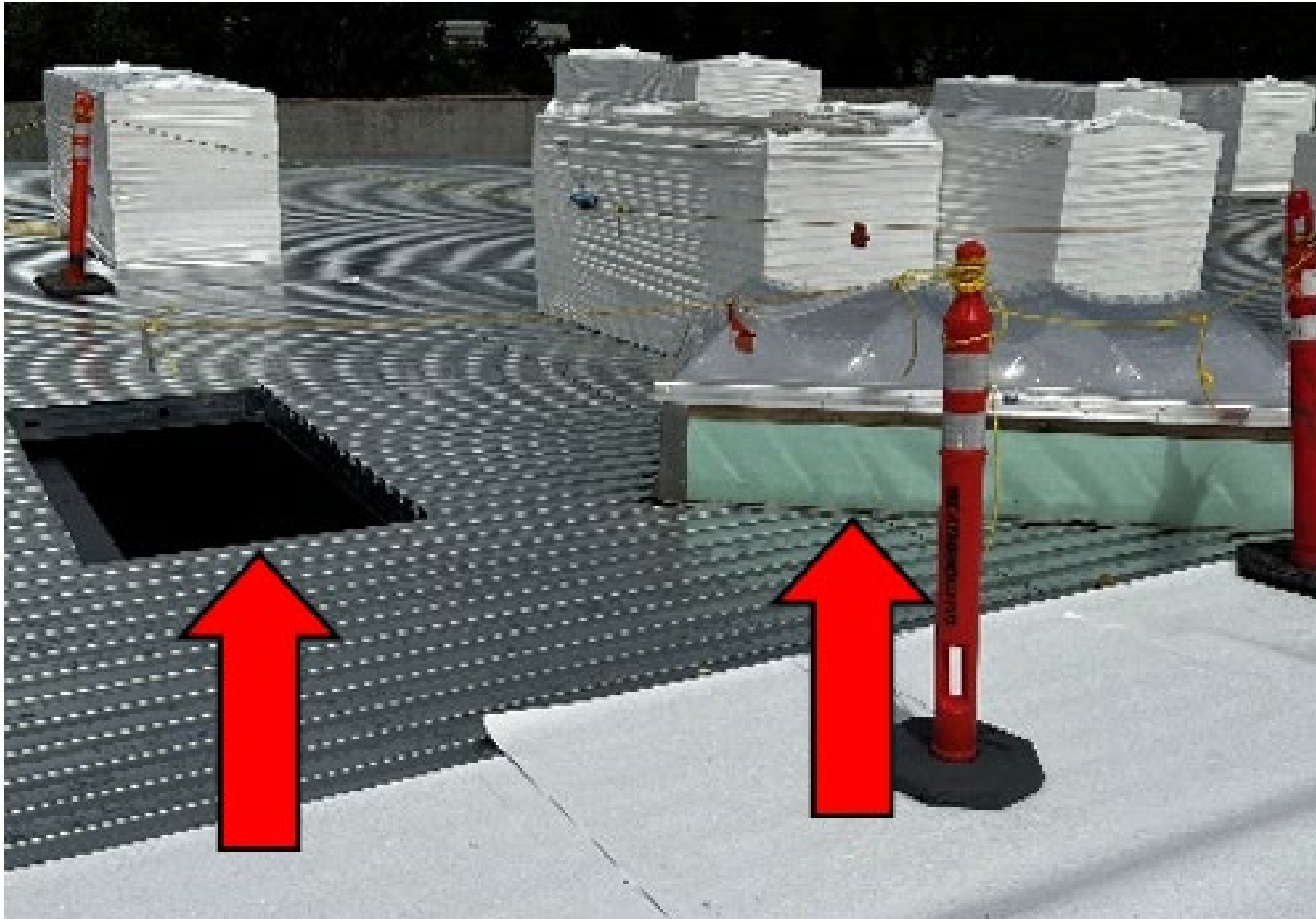
- The roofers were not experienced nor trained in skylight installations. They were going back and forth between installing insulation and skylights, which may have confused them about which skylights were secured. Visibility on the roof was impacted by the bundles of insulation.
- Fall protection warning lines were in place at the roof edge and around a roof ladder access hatch but no fall protection was being used by roofers inside the lines where skylight holes were present. The boom lift basket, which had been moved from below the hole before the fall occurred, was being used as a fall catch platform. This practice was against the manufacturer's safety guidelines and state fall protection rules.

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



- The employer, supervisors, and workers lacked understanding of state fall protection requirements for skylight holes and when a monitor or catch is acceptable to be used. The employer's fall protection work plan (FPWP) did not identify skylight holes as fall hazards.

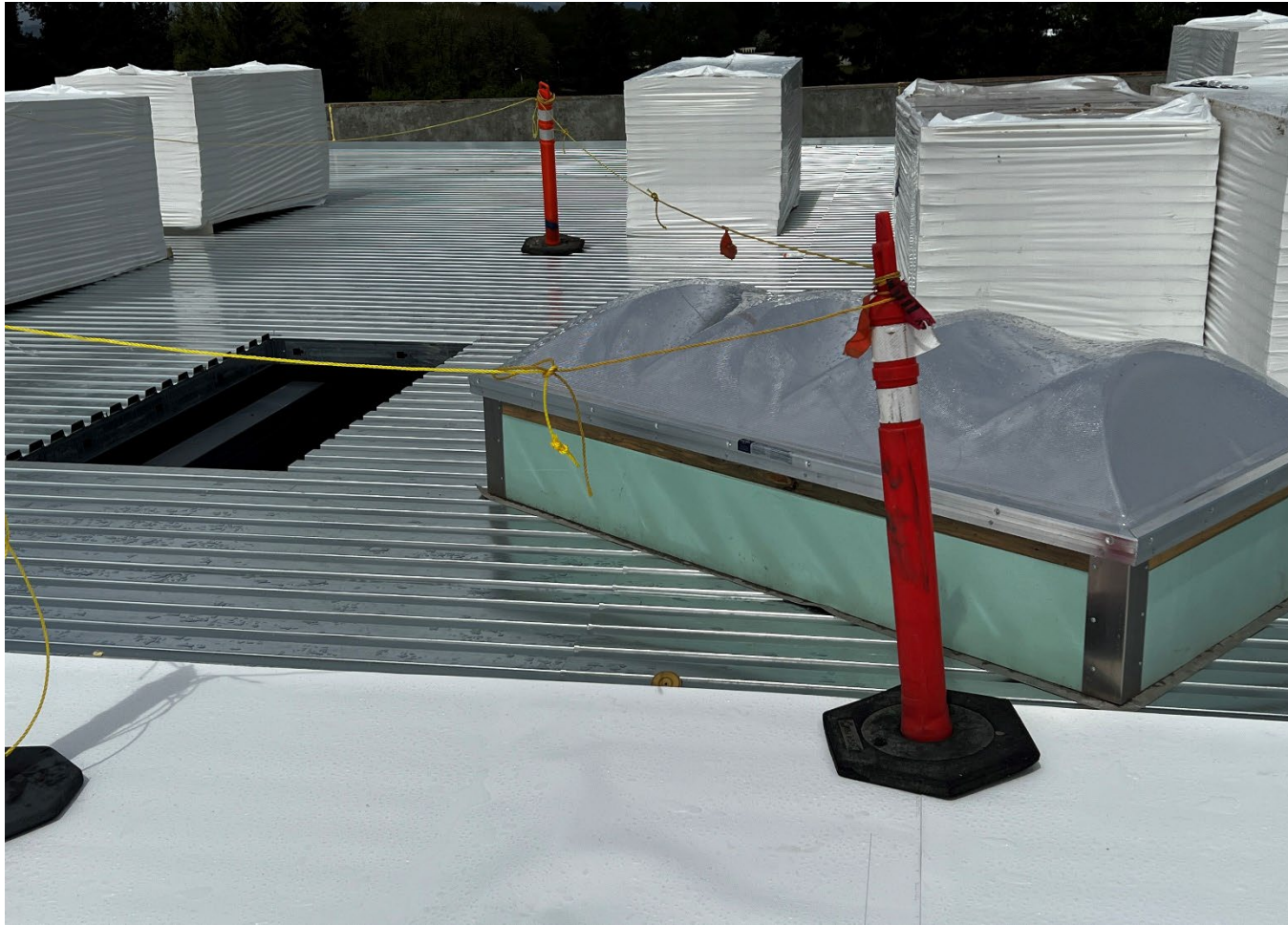
# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 1.** Skylight hole and lid on roof.



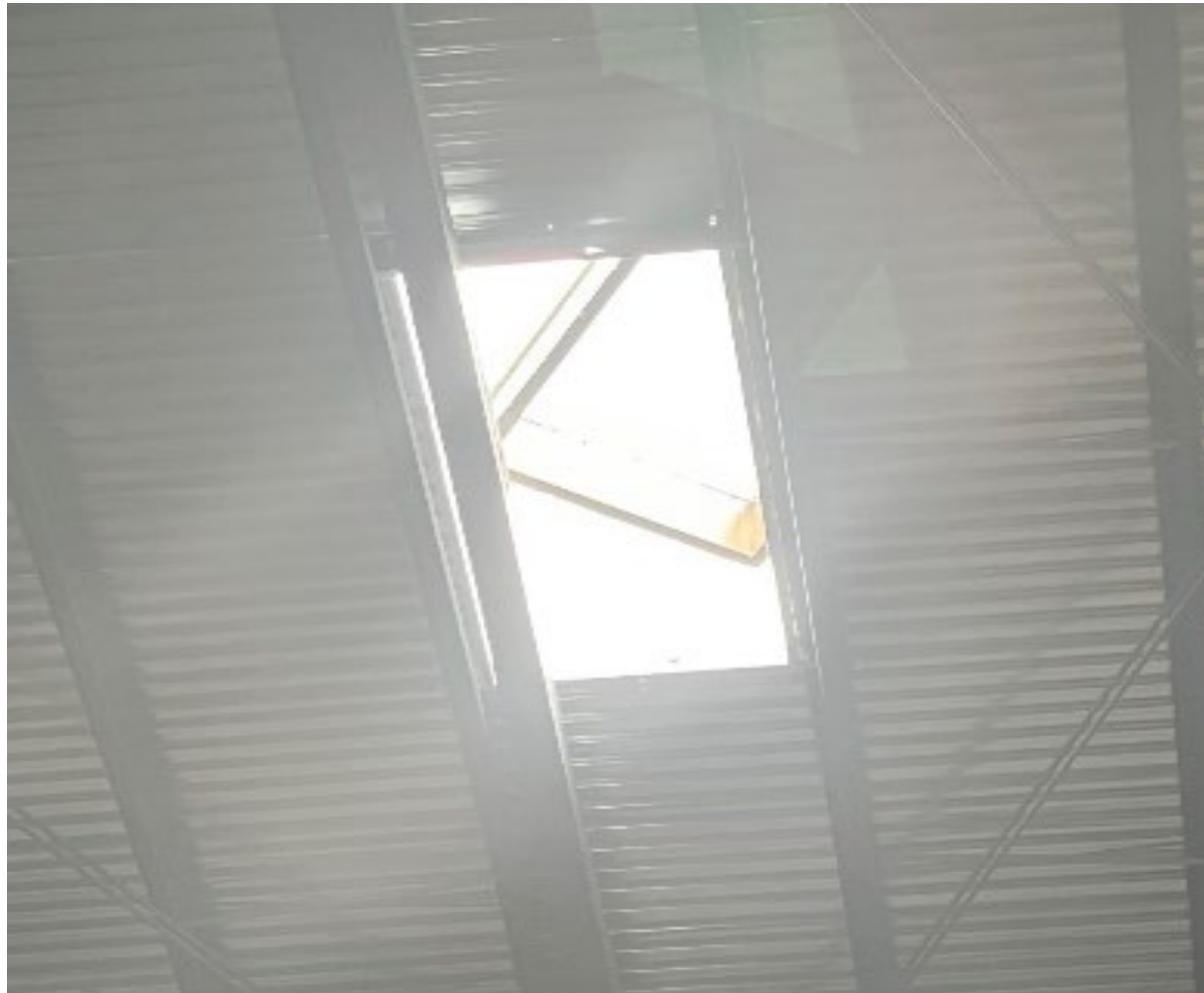
# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 2.** Alternate view of skylight hole and lid on roof.



# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



**Photo 3.** Interior view of skylight hole.

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



**Photo 4.** Interior of building with skylights.



# FATALITY NARRATIVE



**Photo 5.** Boom lift with basket used a fall catch platform.

## **Requirements**

Employers must comply with rules regulating:

- Training for workers by a competent person [WAC 296-880-10015\(2\)](#), fall protection work plan requirements [WAC 296-880-10020\(2\)](#), fall protection systems for holes four feet or more and guarding skylight holes and skylights [WAC 296-880-20005\(3\)\(a\) & \(b\)](#), and provision of fall protection systems for workers exposed to fall hazards of six feet or more to the ground or lower level while engaged in roofing work on a low pitched roof [WAC 296-880-30005\(1\)\(a\)](#).

## **Recommendations**

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

- When roofers work around skylights and openings, provide fall protection guardrails, screens, covers, warning lines, safety nets, or personal fall protection systems and keep the area organized.
- Arrive on-site before work begins or appoint a supervisor to conduct a site hazard assessment with workers to identify fall hazards and develop protection methods and procedures in the FPWP.

## **Recommendations**

- During the pre-job safety meeting, review the site hazard assessment and FPWP and emphasize workers' responsibilities to follow fall protection and roof and skylight safety requirements.



## **Resources**

### [Falls \(From Heights\) safety resources](#)

Washington State Dept. of Labor & Industries

# ***FATALITY NARRATIVE***



*This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident 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 injury.*

Developed by the Washington State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (WA FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), Washington 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](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face).