

FACE Investigation # 90C0032

SUBJECT: Spray Painter Dies after Falling 30 Feet to the Ground from Roof.

SUMMARY:

A spray painter died after falling 30 feet from the roof of a condominium. The victim apparently walked sideways off the edge of the roof while spray painting. He struck an arbor roof constructed of 2" by 10" wooden beams prior to landing on a concrete walkway. The victim was pronounced dead 5 hours later at a local hospital. The Colorado Department of Health investigator concluded that, in order to prevent future similar occurrences, employers should:

- * implement 29 CFR 1926.104, which requires the use of safety belts, lifelines, and lanyards when working from elevations.
- * consider and address worker safety in the planning phase of projects.
- * develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive safety program that includes, but is not limited to, training in fall hazard recognition and the use of fall protection devices.

INTRODUCTION:

On June 14, 1990 a 31-year-old spray painter died of injuries sustained earlier that day when he walked off the edge of a roof while spray painting a wall. Under the terms of a cooperative agreement, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Denver Area office notified the Colorado Department of Health (CDH) of the death and an investigation was initiated. Representatives of the company were contacted and reports were obtained from the local police department and the county coroner.

The employer in this incident is an independent painting contractor that has been in business for over 6 years and employs 30 workers including 11 spray painters. The company has no written safety policy or designated full-time safety officer. Training is not conducted for employees by the company. The victim had been employed by this company for 2 months.

INVESTIGATION:

The victim was working with three coworkers. The worksite was a condominium complex with multiple levels of roof. Prior to the incident the victim had stated he would finish painting a section of the west wall before he had to leave to attend to some serious personal problems. The victim had placed a ladder on the small roof of a protruding shed and climbed onto the roof in order to paint the west wall. The victim was not using any type of fall protection. As he painted across the wall he apparently stepped off the edge and fell 12 feet onto a decorative arbor roof constructed of 2" by 10" wooden beams, breaking two of them. He then fell to the concrete walkway. A coworker discovered the victim at 1225 hours lying on the concrete approximately 5 minutes after he had last passed that area. A call was placed to 911 and an air ambulance was utilized to transport the victim to a local Hospital where he died at 1730 hours. Preoccupation with personal problems was thought to have contributed to his inattention to hazards in his immediate area.

CAUSE OF DEATH:

Massive head injuries due to blunt trauma as a consequence of the fall was listed as the cause of death after autopsy.

RECOMMENDATIONS/DISCUSSION:

Recommendation #1: Employers should implement 29 CFR 1926.104 which requires the use of safety belts, lifelines, and lanyards when working from elevations.

Discussion: Employers should provide personal protective equipment (PPE) (i.e., safety belt, lifeline, and lanyard) to employees working from elevations and exposed to fall hazards. Employers should provide and enforce the use of PPE in accordance with 29 CFR 1926.104. (1)

Recommendation #2: Employers should develop, implement, and enforce a comprehensive written safety program.

Discussion: Employers should emphasize the safety of their employees by developing, implementing and enforcing a comprehensive safety program. The safety program should include , but not be limited to, training workers in the proper selection and use of PPE, along with the recognition and avoidance of fall hazards.

Recommendation #3: Employers should address worker safety in the planning phase of all construction and maintenance projects.

Discussion: Worker safety issues should be discussed and incorporated into all projects during the planning phase and throughout the entire project. The planning for and incorporation of safety measures prior to any work being performed at job sites will help to identify potential worker hazards so that preventive measures can be implemented at the site.

REFERENCE

(1) Office of the Federal Register: Code of Federal Regulations, Labor 29 part 1926. pp.105-106. July 1, 1989.

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