State FACE™ Fatality Narrative

Framer Struck by Wall, Falls through Floor Opening

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-274-2026s REPORT

REPORT DATE: March 6, 2026

INCIDENT DATE: June 3, 2025

WORKER: 73 years old

INDUSTRY: Framing Contractors

OCCUPATION: Construction Framer

SCENE: Residential construction site

EVENT TYPE: Struck by then fall

Image 1. Unguarded floor opening.

SUMMARY

- A 73-year-old framer died when he fell through a floor opening after being struck by a wall. He had worked for his employer, a residential framing contractor, for eight years.
- He was on a six-worker crew raising an external wood-framed wall that was around 14 feet high and weighed 2100 lbs. They were raising the wall from a concrete slab floor over a basement.
- The crew was using two portable iron wall jacks installed on two 12-foot-high two-by-four lumber posts. The jacks were under the wall's top plate, and the posts were standing straight up and unsecured on the floor. Their plan was to manually ratchet the jacks up the posts to lift the wall into place.

SUMMARY

- After the crew began to lift, they attached a pair of two-by-four lumber push sticks to a window cutout in the upper part of the wall. The framer was pushing the stick on the right side of the cutout.
- When the wall reached a 70-degree tilt angle, the crew attached wood braces to the posts to support the jacks higher up. The crew then finished raising the wall into its fully vertical position.
- Once the wall was up, the wall jack posts were free standing. Before the wall could be secured, a worker yelled, “watch out,” as a brace on the right side gave way. The wall collapsed and struck the framer in the back of his head.

SUMMARY

- The impact made him fall through an unguarded four-foot by eight-foot floor opening beside him. He fell eight feet to the concrete floor below.
- His co-workers called 911 and began CPR until first responders arrived. The worker was pronounced dead at the scene.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Following the incident, investigators found:

- The floor opening had been covered by the wall before it was raised. The employer did not ensure that workers used a guardrail, cover, or other fall protection system to prevent falling into the opening.
- Crew stated they did not have enough lumber to cover the opening as they usually did.
- The crew had recent guardrail systems and overhead hazards training and much experience raising walls.

Image 2. Residential home under construction where crew was working.

Image 3. Collapsed wall with wall jacks on posts.

Image 4. Wall jack attached to wood post.

Image 5. Arrow shows approximately where framer was struck by wall and fell through opening.

Image 6. Floor opening where framer fell.

Image 7. Fallen wood bracing in work area where wall collapsed.

Image 8. View of floor opening from the basement.

Image 9. X marks where framer fell. Co-workers brought him into the foreground area and began CPR.

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Protect employees from falling into or through holes four feet or more to the ground or lower level by one of the following fall protection systems: (i) A standard guardrail system, or the equivalent, as specified in WAC 296-880-40005, on all open sides, except where there is entrance to a ramp, stairway, or ladder. The guardrail must be provided with a standard toeboard wherever, beneath the open sides, persons can pass, or there is moving machinery, or there is equipment with which falling materials could create a hazard; (ii) A cover, as specified in WAC 296-880-40015; (iii) A warning line system erected at least 15 feet from all unprotected sides or edges of the hole and meets the requirements of WAC 296-880-40040;

REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

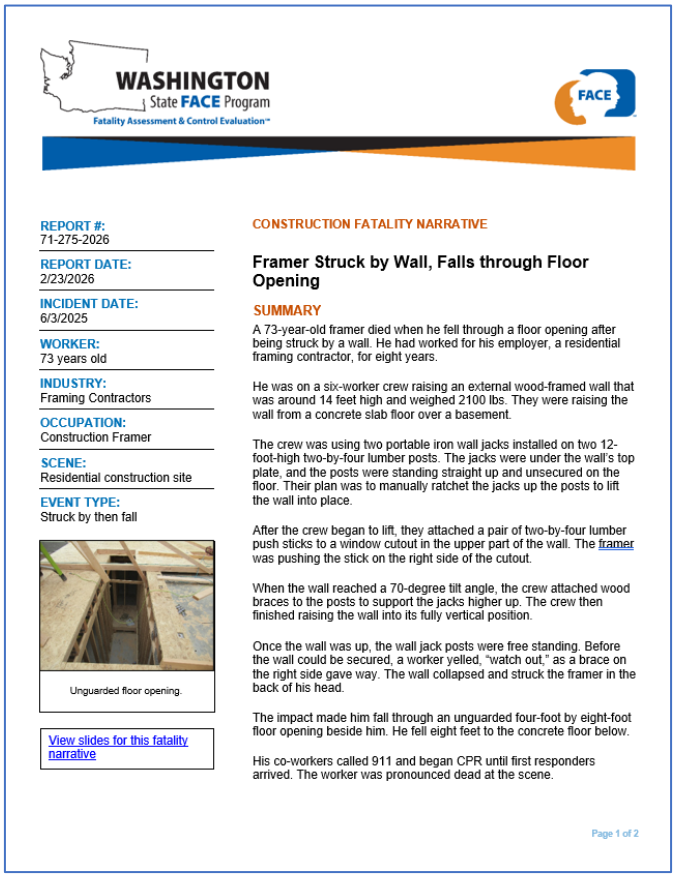
- (iv) When the cover, guardrail system, or warning line system must be temporarily removed to perform a specific task, an employee must remain at the hole until the cover, guardrail system, or warning line system is replaced. The only duty the employee must perform is to warn persons entering the area of the fall hazard. The employee must be protected from the fall hazard by a personal fall arrest system or personal fall restraint system; or (v) Personal fall arrest systems or personal fall restraint systems. See WAC 296-880-20005(3)(a)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Develop accident prevention program (APP) policies.** Policies should require workers to (1) manually support and secure walls after raising, and (2) install and secure covers before working around openings.
- **Create a restricted access zone.** Its length and width should equal the wall plus 4 feet on both sides of it. Mark the zone and continuously monitor it to prevent access while the wall is being raised and secured.

FATALITY NARRATIVE

Framer Struck by Wall, Falls through Floor Opening



WASHINGTON State FACE Program
Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation™

FACE

REPORT #:
71-275-2026

REPORT DATE:
2/23/2026

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6/3/2025

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Construction Framer

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View slides for this fatality narrative

CONSTRUCTION FATALITY NARRATIVE

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He was on a six-worker crew raising an external wood-framed wall that was around 14 feet high and weighed 2100 lbs. They were raising the wall from a concrete slab floor over a basement.

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After the crew began to lift, they attached a pair of two-by-four lumber push sticks to a window cutout in the upper part of the wall. The framer was pushing the stick on the right side of the cutout.

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Once the wall was up, the wall jack posts were free standing. Before the wall could be secured, a worker yelled, "watch out," as a brace on the right side gave way. The wall collapsed and struck the framer in the back of his head.

The impact made him fall through an unguarded four-foot by eight-foot floor opening beside him. He fell eight feet to the concrete floor below.

His co-workers called 911 and began CPR until first responders arrived. The worker was pronounced dead at the scene.

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Download the fatality narrative:

https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research//files/2026/71-274-2026_FramerFloorOpeningFall.pdf

FACE™

RESOURCES

Reducing Falls While Erecting Exterior and Interior Walls.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

DISCLAIMERS

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These report slides are the product of NIOSH’s Cooperative State partner. The findings and conclusions in each report slides are those of the individual Cooperative State partner and do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of NIOSH.

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