Cement Finisher Falls at Construction Site

A 29-year-old female cement finisher fell 165 feet (50 meters) to her death from a high-rise office complex under construction.

The victim was working on the 13th floor, patching holes and rough spots in the cement. At lunchtime, she and a co-worker called for the hoist to bring them down. While waiting, the woman put her hands in her pocket and leaned against the safety gate across the hoist entrance. It gave way, and the woman fell to the ground.

It could not be determined why the gate came open. Each gate is locked, through a U-shaped latch, and the hoist operator holds the only key. All witnesses stated that the padlock was in place.

This employer has made several changes since the woman’s death. Random stress tests are now being done to make sure the locks are stable and latch clamps are now welded in place. Periodically, the hoist operator stops at each floor and inspects the gates, clamps and padlocks. The employer has also installed safety bars and signs to warn workers to stay back.

Despite precautions taken by an employer, each employee must develop safe habits. To lean against an outer perimeter barrier is a poor practice and, in this instance, resulted in death.