Creative OHS Fine Will Benefit the Blind

Alberta judges often impose creative occupational health and safety fines that benefit charitable organizations. In a recent case involving a penalty against a company in relation to a fatal fall, a judge ordered that $95,000 be donated to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB).

The donation will be used to provide job skills training and retraining to visually impaired workers. Medican Developments Inc. must also pay a $5,000 fine in connection with the death of Alex Eisenkrein, 26.

He fell about 10 meters from an unguarded balcony while handing pieces of aluminum soffit to a co-worker. Eisenkrein, who landed on concrete below, died later in the day as a result of severe head and chest injuries. A deciding factor in the CNIB donation was the fact that Eisenkrein was blind in one eye.

The fatality occurred at a condominium construction site in Edmonton, AB. Eisenkrein was not wearing any form of fall protection, a requirement at heights of more than 3.5 meters. Although fall protection equipment was available, Eisenkrein reportedly decided to not use it.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Safety and Health estimates that 60,000 Canadian workers are injured each year in falls. Many of these incidents would not occur if workers were properly trained and equipped to deal with fall hazards. Are you confident you have these hazards covered?