Drywalling Safety Fatality File

45-year-old Drywall Installer Dies After Falling 5’4″ From a Mobile Scaffold–Maryland

The 45-year-old owner of a drywall installation company fell 5′ 4″ from a portable Baker scaffold and fatally injured himself. The victim was working on a commercial remodeling job installing metal studs to hang drywall. The Baker scaffold had no guardrails installed and no personal protective equipment (PPE) was being utilized. The victim was working and simultaneously conversing with the general contractor’s site superintendent when he abruptly stopped speaking and fell forward off of the scaffold striking the concrete floor face first. The site superintendent called 911 immediately on a portable telephone, while another employee turned the victim onto his back. The site superintendent then ran downstairs to seek assistance from medical personnel in a nearby office. The first responders rendered aid until the emergency medical service personnel arrived several minutes later. The victim was taken by helicopter to the Shock Trauma Center where he was pronounced dead 84 minutes later.

The Maryland FACE investigator concluded that to prevent similar incidents in the future employers should:

- develop, implement, and enforce a safety and health program that addresses safe work procedures and hazard recognition.
- ensure that the structural components and safety features of scaffolds are in good working order and used in accordance with the requirements of the manufacturer.
- be sure that health problems of employees which may compromise safe work practices are treated promptly to minimize the risk of injury.