Getting High On Safety Fatality File

Worker Dies After Falling from an Elevating Work Platform (Scissor Lift)

A carpenter died after falling approximately 12 feet on a cement floor at the construction site of a new building. The victim and a co-worker were using a self-propelled elevating work platform to install 12’ x 4’ sheets of drywall when the accident occurred. The platform of the scissor lift was 8 feet long with a 3-foot telescoping extension. Since the drywall sheets were 12 feet long, the end guardrail was removed to accommodate them. The victim inadvertently fell from the unguarded end of the platform.

WorkSafeNB determined the causes of the accident were:

- Fall arrest equipment was not used while working from an unguarded area.
- While marking and cutting sheets of drywall, the worker was placed in a dangerous unguarded area.
- Precautions were not taken to prevent a fall after removal of a guardrail.

Recommended Preventive Action

The appropriate scissor lift for the job must be used. In this case, a larger scissor lift would have accommodated the sheets of drywall without necessitating the removal of guardrails.

Safe operation of self-propelled elevating work platforms

- Make sure the work platform meets CSA standards.
- Read and understand the operator manual.
- Use all available protective and safety devices.
- Check tires for proper air pressure.

- Check ground and floor areas for holes and obstructions.
- Maintain safe clearance from overhead electrical lines.
- Never climb on guardrails to gain greater height.
- Never use ladders, planks, steps or other devices on the platform to gain greater height.