Ladder Use Fatality File

Ladder Fatality from Fall

On Friday, Aug. 25, 2017, four gutter installation specialists arrived on the construction site of a new private residence for the purpose of installing gutters. This was their first day on the site. At approximately 11:00 a.m., the victim and a co-worker gathered two, 16 ft. aluminum extension ladders and approached the front porch.

The workers set up the first ladder on the side of the house in order to access the porch roof. The two then worked together to carry the second ladder up to the porch roof, where they positioned it in order to take measurements of the house roof. The victim ascended the second ladder while his coworker held the base of it in order to keep it in place.

The victim took measurements and verbally communicated the results to the owner of the company who was located on the ground below.

In an interview with the coworker who was holding the ladder, he stated that as the victim completed his measurements and began descending the ladder that was placed on the porch roof, the steep angle of the porch roof caused the base of the ladder to ‘kick out’ and strike the employee who was holding the ladder. This resulted in the victim, the coworker and ladder all falling 10 ft. 9 in. from the porch roof to the ground below.

As the incident occurred, the owner of the company stated that he had his back turned away from the house and was walking away in order to cut the guttering material when he heard the noise behind him. As he turned, he observed the two employees and the ladder on the ground.

The coworker was uninjured, but the victim had landed on his head and neck area, and was unresponsive. The owner of the company rushed to the victim and called 911. Emergency services arrived

within five minutes of the call and transported the victim to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead at 3:13 p.m. the same day.

Engineering controls can also be used, such as a travel restraint, fall arrest system with adequate anchorage points and guard rails installed along open edges. If travel restraints and fall arrest systems are used, workers must receive adequate training before starting work and be supervised throughout. Any remaining risk must be minimised using administrative controls – such as a safe system of work that considers the design, condition and layout of elevated work areas, including potential fall distance and the structure’s load rating, as well as correct set-up, stability and security of ladders. It should ensure that only light work is undertaken on ladders, where three points of contact can be maintained and tools can be operated safely with one hand.

Workers should also ensure that they have adequate knowledge and training to perform tasks safely and carry out the emergency and rescue procedure if a fall does occur. Finally, workers must ensure they have access to and use personal protective equipment, such as non-slip footwear.