# PPE Doesn’t Replace Thinking: Human Behaviour AND Gear Fatality File

## US Department of Labor places Louisiana contractor in severe violator enforcement program after 34-year-old worker’s fatal fall at Georgia worksite

**What Happened**

In April 2023, a 34-year-old worker employed by Eastern Constructors Inc. was guiding an I-beam into place atop a plant’s paint building in Georgia when he lost his balance and fell. His safety line – the PPE that should have saved his life – was cut by the sharp edge of the building’s upper frame as he fell. He died at the scene despite the efforts of emergency personnel.

**What Went Wrong**

OSHA’s investigation determined that Eastern Constructors Inc. failed to ensure workers were provided fall arrest equipment appropriate for the work conditions and capable of resisting sharp edges. The company also allowed worn and damaged fall arrest systems to remain in service rather than taking them out of service. The PPE existed. It was being worn. But it was the wrong PPE for the specific hazard present – and no one had stopped to think about whether the equipment matched the conditions of the job. OSHA cited the company for one willful and one serious violation, proposed $160,724 in penalties, and placed the company in its Severe Violator Enforcement Program.

**The Bottom Line**

This worker was wearing his fall protection. That equipment still failed to save his life — not because PPE doesn't work, but because the wrong PPE was selected for the specific conditions of the task. Choosing, inspecting, and matching PPE to the actual hazards present is not a formality. It is the difference between equipment that performs when it matters and equipment that fails at the worst possible moment.

**Source:** https://www.dol.gov/newsroom