

Steel Pile Falls On Worker

A construction worker died when a 2,000-pound (907-kilogram) steel pile (column) struck him.

A crew was driving piles into lakeshore mud to make a base for a bridge. Workers put a choker around a pile so the pile driver could raise it. However, while it lifted the pile the crane line supporting the pile driver's hammer mechanism lost tension. The hammer fell and severed choker lines holding the pile.

Meanwhile, the victim had his back to the pile. He was standing on a floating platform near shore, ready to position a compressed air hose when the falling pile knocked him into the water. Co-workers found him breathing. He was treated at a trauma center for head, chest and abdominal injuries but died that day.

If you are in a situation where a heavy column could fall, a safety rule is to stand clear of it—at least the length of the column—as it is raised into position. If your job requires that you stay closer, remember to watch the operation at all times and have an escape path.