Supervisor Falls From Roof

Could This Have Been You?

On average, 5,000 to 6,000 workers are killed each year. Learn from the following reports of real workplace fatalities to avoid a similar fate.

A 61-year-old construction supervisor was fatally injured when he fell from a roof.

The victim was an experienced construction worker who had worked for his employer for about two years. On the day of the accident, he started work on the roof before the work crew arrived. He was working at or near the edge of the roof, approximately 17 feet (about five meters) from the ground, and he was not wearing fall protection equipment. He either slipped off or tripped over tools on the roof and fell over the edge, landing head first on the concrete below.

As there were no witnesses, the exact cause cannot be determined. Some clues are as follows:

The victim was 9.5 feet (nearly three meters) from the base of the ladder, with his head closest to the ladder. His back was against the house wall. The homeowner also heard two thumps on the roof, before his wife saw the victim pass her window. The location and the thumping noise indicates he was probably on the roof when he fell. The air nailer was found on top of him. Probable causes of his death are:

- He tripped on the air hose and fell off the roof.
- He tripped on the roofing, and fell off the roof.
- He fell accessing or leaving the ladder.

Following are some life-and-death questions regarding your workplace:

- Are your employees working at heights of 10 feet or higher?
- Do you have fall protection equipment available?

- Are your employees trained and competent in the use of fall protection equipment?
- Do you require and enforce the use of fall protection equipment?
- Have you provided training to your employees in the safe use of ladders?
- Are you and your employees familiar with the requirements of Part C-1 Fall Restraint and Fall Arrest WAC 296-155-245?
- Do you develop a fall protection work plan for all jobs where employees are exposed to a fall hazard of 10 feet (3.65 meters) or more?
- Does your ladder use follow the requirements of Part J, Stairways and Ladders WAC 296-155-480?