Worker Dies After Eight-Foot Fall

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In the first fatality for his company, a North Carolina worker died after a fall from a truck bed. The victim, a 48-year-old Hispanic man, was packing construction debris into a single-axle five-ton dump truck. The crew foreman used a front-end loader with a clamp attachment to pile debris in the truck bed. The foreman spoke mostly English while the crew spoke primarily Spanish. The employer had no health and safety or training program.

On the day of the incident, the victim and a co-worker were standing in the truck bed, about eight feet up, taking material from the loader and packing it into place. The co-worker was standing near the cab, looking forward, when he heard a thud from the rear. He looked back, but couldn’t see the victim.

He looked over the side of the truck and saw the man, bleeding at the mouth and ears. He yelled for help, and the foreman called 911. Paramedics attended promptly, but the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

The investigation concluded that having the workers in the back of the truck, standing on a jumble of debris, was dangerous. What’s underfoot where you work? The employer in this case had no safety training plan, and language presented a communication barrier. Employers need safety training available in as many languages as needed to ensure they can understand, evaluate and communicate hazards.

Source: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program