Worker Dies After Fall From Four Floors

INCIDENT

Juan Carlos Reyes was found unresponsive and not breathing after his fall from four floors. He was trying to put wire spools inside the fourth floor of the building where he was working from a scaffold. The scaffold became unstable, it was not secure to the wall and ultimately gave way.

NEED TO KNOW

Juan Carlos Reyes, had his last fatal day of work on May 24th / 2014. Juan Carlos Reyes, a construction worker fell four floors at the site of a Marriott Hotel under construction in Texas.

He was pronounced dead on arrival by emergency crews.

BUSINESS / REGULATIONS

OSHA's Corpus Christi Texas office investigated this incident and found that Mr. Reyes employer, Angel Electric had committed six violations of which five were serious and one was "willful". OSHA recommended that fines of $ 35.400.00 for failure to ensure that the scaffold he fell from was erected by a qualified person and for failure to put a fall arrest system in place.

Mr. Reyes left behind a wife and three children for an "accident" that was preventable.

STATISTICS

It has been documented that falls are not the exception but are the most common causes of worker fatalities in the United States and Canada. In 2013, there were 574 workers deaths from falls. By 2017, the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (C.F.O.I), 887 fatal falls occur, the most reported since the Census data began in 1992.

Hispanic workers are particularly vulnerable to risks in the workplace. According to data from the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (B.L.S), 817 Hispanic or Latino workers died on the job in 2013, the highest figure recorded since 2008. On the job deaths for Hispanic or Latino workers increased by nine percent from 2012, while fatalities decreased for white, African American and Asian workers in the same period.

Constructions sites and other workplaces in Texas are under the jurisdiction of federal OSHA, but U.S. OSHA has just ninety-eight inspectors to cover the entire state of Texas: 268,580 square miles, more than 10 million workers and over 500,000 employers. **The AFL-CIO estimates it would take this team of less than 100 people approximately 136 years to perform just one inspection of every workplace in Texas.** These inspections would be in addition to responding to workplace – related injuries, illness and deaths like the tragic – and preventable loss of Juan Carlos Reyes.

PREVENTION

There is a well- worn phrase that an "ounce of prevention fetches a pound of cure." Most workplaces "accidents" are not accidents but caused through and by human error and lack of action. Juan Carlos Reyes "accident" could had been prevented with the correct workplace practices and policies. An effective and proper prevention strategy would have saved his life. This strategy includes the following:

- Secure ladders
- Secure scaffolds
- Install guardrails employ safety harness
- PROPER TRAINING of P.P.E