Worker Slips On Wet Tarp

After doing the same job for nearly 20 years, a worker died in a falling from the top of a load on a flatbed trailer. He worked for a company which packaged sand, gravel and concrete at a rural site. He was experienced at bagging the sand and loading the trailers.

He was in the shipping yard and had been loading the trailer with pallets of bagged cement. He had climbed on top of the pallets to spread a tarp over them when he apparently slipped and fell to the ground. He suffered severe head injuries and died the next day.

The tarp was wet and icy, and it appears he slipped and fell to his death.

Safety investigators recommended tarping should be done by two persons in wet conditions or adverse weather. Each worker should position and secure the tarp while standing at opposite sides of the loaded truck, avoiding the need to stand on a wet or slippery tarp. No one should ever stand or walk on a wet tarp.

Investigators also recommended:

- Employers should conduct a job hazard analysis of all work activities with the participation of the workers.
- Employers should provide a safe means of access to the trailers.
- Employers and employees should ensure that tarps are stored in an area protected from the weather.

Whether loading and tarping is done as a regular part of the routine or as an occasional task, safe procedures must be followed. This fatality is also a reminder about the hazards of other equipment in wet and icy conditions. Ladders, vehicle steps, decks and docks can all become slippery.