Young & New: Managing the Risk of Early-Career Workers Fatality File

19-Year-Old Roofing Worker Dies After 30-Foot Fall Through Unprotected Skylight

A 19-year-old roofing worker died after falling about 30 feet through an unprotected skylight while working on a low-sloped roof in Neville Island, Pennsylvania. The young worker was employed by two joint commercial roofing contractors and performed roofing tasks near multiple skylights that had no fall protection, such as guardrails, covers, or personal fall arrest systems.

OSHA’s investigation found that both roofing companies willfully ignored federal fall protection requirements. Workers were allowed to work around skylights and roof edges without any protective systems in place, and an aerial lift was also used without fall protection. OSHA cited both employers for willful and serious violations and noted that their failure to follow well-known fall protection rules cost a young worker his life.

This case illustrates the elevated risk faced by young, early-career workers who are often assigned to high-hazard tasks like roofing but may lack the experience and confidence to recognize dangers or refuse unsafe work.

Source: Dol.gov