

Case 488. A 72-year-old mechanic died from injuries sustained in an approximate 3.5-foot fall from a semi-tractor cab secured on the bed of a parked low-boy trailer.

A 72-year-old male mechanic died from injuries sustained in an approximate 3.5-foot fall from a semi-tractor cab secured on the bed of a parked low boy trailer. The decedent had been troubleshooting a lighting issue on a semi-truck tractor in the repair shop. He and a coworker decided to test the relay (Relay #1) to determine if it was defective. In the yard was a wrecked semi-tractor secured to the bed of a low-boy trailer. The low-boy trailer with the wrecked semi-tractor was positioned between two semi tractor-trailer combinations. The decedent walked out to the wrecked semi-tractor carrying Relay #1 with him. The relay from the wrecked semi-tractor in the yard (Relay #2) was located in one of the fuse panels under the dashboard, next to the brake pedal and directly above the floor on the driver's side. To access Relay #2, the decedent stepped up 20 inches onto the low boy trailer bed, then stepped up approximately 17 inches to the first step of the semi-tractor. At some point during this process, he opened the driver's side door of the semi-tractor cab. It is unknown if he stepped up approximately 19 inches to the second step access the fuse panel. The tractor cab floor was approximately 16 inches above the second step. He removed Relay #2 from the fuse panel. A few minutes later, his coworker decided to check on him because he thought the decedent should have been back to the shop. The coworker walked out to the decedent's location and found him lying on his back on the concrete at an angle to the low-boy trailer, with his feet facing the low boy. The decedent's safety glasses, flashlight and tool were found on the ground. Nearby was a relay, which was found lying near one of the parked semi tractor-trailers. The wrecked truck's cab door was fully opened and the fuse panel door removed. A relay was found lying on carpet inside the cab. It is unknown which relay was found in the tractor cab and which relay was found on the ground near him. His coworker called for emergency response. The decedent was transported to a nearby hospital where he died 10 days later from the head injuries sustained at the time of the fall.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

408.10220(1): GI PART 2, FLOOR AND WALL OPENINGS, STAIRWAYS, SKYLIGHTS, Rule 220. (1) One of the following shall be used to gain access to another elevation of more than 16 inches: (a) Flight of stairs. (b) Fixed industrial stairs. (c) Ramp. d) Fixed ladder. (e) A portable ladder as prescribed in the general industry safety standards commission standard, Part 4. Portable Ladders, being R 408.10401 to R 408.10456 of the Michigan Administrative Code, may be used for temporary access to another elevation.

Employee was exposed to fall hazard when attempting to gain elevation more than 16 inches in height; mechanic climbed up and onto 20-inch high low-boy trailer to obtain electrical relay for testing from a damaged semi-tractor. The employee died 10 days later from the injuries sustained at the time of the fall. *(MIFACE removed the date of death and date of injury from the citation)*