CASE 12. 53-year old male roofer dies when aluminum ladder contacts an overhead power line

A 53-year old male roofer was the sole owner of a roofing business. He and coworkers had started a re-roof job on an A-frame house. The crew had placed tarpaper on the roof; the roof was partially covered with shingles. The victim and two coworkers returned to the house early the next morning while it was still dark because it was raining and water was getting into the basement of the home. The victim and two co-workers came to tarp the roof and had been working approximately 10 minutes. An aluminum ladder was extended while the ladder was laying horizontally on the ground. The victim and a coworker were raising the ladder up to lean against the roof when the ladder came into contact with an overhead 7200- volt power line that was 26 feet off of the ground. Another coworker saw a “blue streak” at the base of the ladder as the electric current was going to ground. The victim was electrocuted, the other coworker was hospitalized and released.

MIOSHA issued the following serious violations to the employer:

1. Using a Type II aluminum extension ladder on a roofing job that was only 18 feet from overhead power lines. The ladder did not meet MIOSHA codes. (Fixed and Portable Ladders, Part II, Rule R408.41123)
2. Using a 28 foot aluminum ladder within 10 feet of an energized overhead powerline. The employees were exposed to being electrocuted or shocked. The powerlines were only 18 feet from the house that was being re-roofed. (Fixed and Portable Ladders, Part II, Rule R408.41124(6))

MIOSHA issued the following other than serious violation to the employer:

1. The company did not have an “accident prevention program” . (General Rules, Part 1, Rule R408.40114(1))