

Case 25. 39-year-old male carpenter died when the elevated platform he was working in fell approximately 12 feet from rough terrain forklift.

A 39-year-old male carpenter was a member of a three-person crew involved with constructing a second story addition over the garage at a residential property. The week prior, the crew had parked the rough terrain forklift on the property. Arriving the day of work, the forklift was placed into service without performing a vehicle or work platform check. The homemade platform was four feet wide by ten feet long with a railing on three sides and did not comply with MIOSHA regulations. On the day of the incident, the forklift operator raised the victim while he stood in the platform to a height of approximately 12 feet. The operator got off the forklift, parked and shut off the forklift. He handed the victim a 20-foot aluminum pick to place on the floor of the platform. The driver handed the other end of the pick to another coworker who carried the pick up to the ladder jack. The pick extended approximately one to two feet on the floor of the basket and the same distance on the ladder jack. The driver went to get some tools and the victim entered the building from the platform for some tools. The coworker was moving along the pick marking trusses for trimming. The victim reentered the basket and began to use a saw to cut the tails off some of the marked trusses. Neither the victim nor the coworker on the pick were wearing fall protection. The driver was in the second story addition when he heard the saw go quiet, then a loud noise. He looked out of a nearby window and observed the coworker on the pick fall to the ground. Turning his head, he saw the victim, in the basket with the forks on the ground. The coworker that fell from the pick contacted 911 while the forklift driver went to free the victim from the basket. Emergency response arrived, and the victim was declared dead. It appears that he hit his head on the railing. It was found that the safety latches that are designed to hook the forks to the forklift were in the up position. A chain was around the basket and the forks but was not attached to the forklift. The employer did not have a written safety program.

MIOSHA issued the following “Serious” and “Other” citations to the employer:

Serious:

1. Work platform, forklift attachment was not secured to the rough terrain forklift; latches were in an open position and the platform chain was not properly attached to the carriage. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41243(3))
2. Employees were not wearing personal fall arrest equipment on rough terrain forklift scaffold platform when platform elevated approximately 12-15 feet. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41243(9))
3. The operator left control of the forklift and was performing carpentry operation at another location when an employee was working on the forklift’s platform elevated approximately 12-15 feet. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41243(11))
4. The platform used by employees did not have a guardrail on front, a toeboard platform, or a sign on the on the rough terrain forklift to identify the capacity of the platform. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41243(5))

Other:

1. The employer did not have a prelift meeting for elevating employees on the rough terrain forklift scaffold. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41243(1))
2. The operator did not have a permit to operate the rough terrain forklift. (Scaffolds and Scaffold Platforms, Part 12, Rule R408.41246(1))
3. The employer did not have an accident prevention program. (General Rules, Part 1, Rule 114(1))