

**Case 68. 73-year old male construction laborer was killed when an unsupported concrete block wall collapsed onto him.**

On August 26, 2004, a 73-year-old male construction laborer (the victim) and a coworker were cleaning the inside of a newly constructed concrete masonry wall under the porch at a residence. The work area was dark. Both employees had lights. The concrete block wall had been laid during the past 3-5 days. On the first day, they laid a couple rows of blocks, the next day they laid all but the top couple of rows. The day before the incident, they laid the last couple of rows on the top of the wall. On the day of the incident, three other company employees were working outside of the wall and were using a skid steer loader to backfill the excavation with sand. It appears that the sand backfill was approximately 4-5 feet high on the concrete block. The block wall collapsed onto the victim and his coworker cleaning the wall. The sand was being dumped into the excavation instead of placing it in lifts and compacting it. The 2003 Michigan residential code R404.1.7 states that backfill shall not be placed against the wall until the wall has sufficient strength and has been anchored to the floor above or has been sufficiently braced to prevent damage by the backfill. Emergency response was called and the victim was pronounced dead at the scene.

MIOSHA issued the following Serious citations to the employer:

Serious:

ACT 154, PUBLIC ACT OF 1974, 408.1011(a).

The employer did not furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee.

No bracing on the unreinforced concrete masonry block basement wall that consists of 8-inch concrete masonry block approximately 46 feet long and 9 feet high, 14 blocks in height. Backfill material was not being placed in small lifts, but was being piled against new unreinforced concrete masonry block basement wall in the excavation approximately 6 feet in height. Employees were inside of the basement cleaning the new basement wall when the wall collapsed and fatally injured one employee and seriously injured another employee while working on the front porch of the residence.

One method of abatement would be to properly brace the new concrete masonry block wall and to install the back fill in small lifts evenly applying the load of the back fill to the new masonry wall per the Michigan Residential Building Code and the National Concrete Masonry Association.

Serious:

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, Rule 114(1)

An employer shall develop, maintain, and coordinate with employees an accident prevention program, a copy of which shall be available at the worksite.

No accident prevention program developed, maintained, or coordinated with employees.