

Case 54. 20-year old male worker died after he fell 27 feet through a roof skylight to a cement floor.

On Saturday, March 13, 2004, a 20-year-old male worker fell 27 feet through a roof skylight to a cement floor. He and several other workers were tarring the roof of the manufacturing building. He and some of the people he was with had been hired that morning and started working at approximately 9:30 a.m. The fall occurred at approximately 1:45 p.m. He was the bucket man. A worker on a lower level would place a bucket of tar on a rope. The deceased would pull the bucket up to the roof and pour it into a large bin into which the others could dip their mops, or he would pour it directly onto the roof to be spread. According to one of the workers, to pour the tar from the bucket onto the roof, he would bend over and move from side to side, front to back. The bucket he was using was found 5 to 10 feet from the skylight. According to the police report, his boot prints were evident in the "fresh tar on the roof leading directly from the east end of the roof to the broken skylight". His were the only prints leading to the skylight. Although others were on the roof, no one saw him fall through the skylight. It is possible that his feet became sticky from the tar and he tripped, or that he did not see the skylight and he tripped and fell into it. There were no warnings on the roof, nor were the workers using fall protection. He died in the hospital from multiple systems trauma on the day after his fall. Toxicological analysis of his blood indicated the presence of active and inactive metabolites of cannabis.

MIOSHA issued the following five Serious citations to the employer.

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 was available. The employees were not given any Fall Protection Training or First Aid training.

Serious:

ADMINISTRATIVE RULE R408.22139.1, Reporting to MIOSHA, Rule 1139(1)

The company did not notify MIOSHA within 8 hours of the fatality.

Serious:

FALL PROTECTION PART 45, Rule 4502, REF OSHA 1926.501(B)(10)

Employees engaged in roofing activities on low-slope roofs with unprotected sides and edges 6 feet or higher shall be protected by guardrail systems, or a combination of warning line system and guardrail system, warning line system and safety net system, or warning line system and personal fall arrest system or warning line system and safety monitoring system.

No fall protection, no flags, no safety nets, no guardrails were available for the roofing crew who were installing hot tar to the roof 27 feet to the high roof and 17 feet to the low roof.

Serious:

FALL PROTECTION, PART 45, RULE 4502, REF OSHA 1926.501(B)(4)(i)
Each employee on walking/working surfaces shall be protected from falling through holes (including skylights) more than 6 feet by personal fall arrest systems, covers, or guardrail systems erected around such holes.

No covers or guardrails were in place to prevent employees from falling through the skylights on the 27-foot high roof.

Serious:

FALL PROTECTION, PART 45, RULE 4502, REF OSHA 1926.503(A)(2)
The employer shall assure that each employee has been trained by a competent person qualified in the areas of fall hazards, fall protection systems, safety systems, employee's role in safety monitoring system, use of mechanical equipment on low-sloped roofs, handling and storage of equipment and erection of overhead protection, role of employees in fall protection plans and the standards contained in this subpart.

No training was given to the employees to prevent them from falling.