

Case 207. 31-year-old male journeyman elevator mechanic died when he fell five stories after stepping into an elevator shaft after opening the shaft doors.

A 31-year-old male journeyman elevator mechanic died when he fell five stories (approximately 88 feet) after stepping into an elevator shaft after opening the shaft doors. The decedent unlocked the lockout for the traction elevator, which was used to transport trade workers and materials to different levels of the project. He then proceeded to the 5th floor to begin his work duties. The decedent's work practice was to leave the elevator car stationed at the 6th floor, the car's lights in the off position, and the car doors in an open position. Two days prior to the incident, another contractor had asked the decedent if he could use the elevator when the decedent was gone for the weekend. The decedent indicated it was okay to use the elevator and to leave the elevator stationed at the 5th floor, and "locked up" when the contractor was finished. Police records indicate that the elevator was not operated during the weekend hours. The decedent inserted his Lunar key to open the hoist way doors. When he opened the hoist way doors, he stepped off the 5th floor landing into the open shaft, apparently thinking the elevator car was stationed at the 5th floor. He fell to the elevator pit floor, which was six feet below the 1st floor. After the incident, it was determined that the elevator car was stationed at the 6th floor. First aid was attempted but unsuccessful and the decedent was declared dead at the scene. A miscommunication may have occurred between the decedent and the contractor discussing the elevator. According to the police report, the conversation was regarding access to the elevator machine room on the roof and not the use of the elevator.

At the conclusion of its investigation, the MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations:

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.

Company accident Prevention Program is not being coordinated with employees at the work location. Employees are not aware of the location, contents of Accident Prevention Program.

GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(2)(C).

An accident prevention program, shall as a minimum, provide for the following:

Inspections of the construction site, tools, materials, and equipment to assure that unsafe conditions which could create a hazard are eliminated.

SERIOUS:

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT, PART 6, RULE 622(1).

A helmet, as prescribed in R408.40621 shall be used to protect the employee where a hazard or risk of injury exists from falling or flying objects or particles or from other harmful contacts or exposures.

An employee is not wearing his head protection while entering and leaving the work site. This employee is being exposed to head injury. This worksite has various hanging, bumping, and flying objects due to work operations being performed, i.e. sawing, cutting, hot work, being performed in and outside of the work site building.