

Case 212. 27-year-old mechanic died when an air shock bag he was installing on the rear axle of a 35-passenger vehicle struck him.

A 27-year-old male mechanic died when an air shock bag he was installing on the rear axle of a 35-passenger vehicle struck him. The procedure to install the air bag: a) remove the vehicle's shock to allow room for the air shock bag, b) use an air gun to slightly inflate the air shock bag to permit its base plate to descend level onto the rear axle pad, c) install the air shock bag base plate on the rear axle pad, d) attach the top of airbag to the vehicle, and e) attach an airline and inflate the air shock bag. The decedent did not follow this procedure. The decedent first secured the top part of the airbag to the vehicle. He had inflated the air bag, and he had not removed the vehicle's shock. Due to the procedure variance, not enough room was provided to align the air shock bag's 10-inch diameter, 6-inch thick plastic base plate holes to the lower axle-mounting pad. With the vehicle running, which continued to inflate and build up pressure within the air shock bag, he positioned himself under the vehicle and used a crow bar in an attempt to align the air shock bag's base plate to the lower axle-mounting pad. The air shock bag's base plate moved off the lower axle-mounting pad and struck him in the forehead. Police noted a 6-inch by 1-inch piece of plastic had broken from around the edge of the air bag's base plate. The decedent walked from his work area to another work area to seek help. Emergency response was notified. He was transported to a nearby hospital and died one day after the incident.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following alleged Serious citation:

SERIOUS:

AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE OPERATIONS, PART 72, RULE 7211(a).

Provide training to an employee as to the hazards, safe operations of the assigned job and applicable rules of this part:

The rear air bag (shock) inflated while employee was installing it. The air shock slipped off lower axle mounting pad, striking him in his forehead, resulting in his death.