

Case 498. 54-year-old farm hand died when he fell from an 8-foot podium step ladder to the ground.

A 54-year-old male farm hand died when he fell from an 8-foot podium step ladder to the ground. The ladder was positioned on the driver's side of a semi-tractor trailer being loaded with soy beans. The driver's side of the semi-tractor had a second set of two steps, which were located to the side of the steps utilized to access the tractor cab. The second set of steps provided access to the 5th wheel section at the rear of the cab. The decedent had been standing on the podium section of the ladder, monitoring the loading of soy beans into the semi-trailer. The soy beans were loaded from the rear of the trailer to the front of the trailer. The decedent's coworker (driver) was in the semi-tractor cab. When it was time to move the trailer to ensure even distribution of the soy beans, the decedent used a hand signal to alert the semi-tractor driver to back the trailer. The semi-tractor driver indicated to the MIOSHA compliance officer that the decedent usually descended the ladder prior to the driver moving the tractor-trailer unit. While backing the trailer, the trailer or the tractor 5th wheels may have contacted the ladder, causing the decedent to lose his balance and fall from the ladder, striking the metal frame of the 5th wheel. He then landed on the stone gravel driveway at the base of the ladder. The ladder stayed upright. Emergency response was called and the decedent was declared dead in the emergency room.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued one serious citation at the conclusion of its investigation.

SERIOUS: 408.1011(a): ACT 154, MICHIGAN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT

An Employer shall furnish to each employee, employment and a place of employment that is free from recognized hazards that are causing, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to the employee.

The employer did not furnish employment and a place of employment which were free from recognized hazards that were causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees in that an employee was exposed to fall hazards. On *date*, an employee was standing on a Warner 8-foot fiberglass podium step ladder to check the level of soy beans being loaded into the tractor trailer. The employee gave a signal to the driver of the tractor trailer to move the trailer, and while doing so the tractor trailer struck the ladder and the employee fell striking the tractor portion of the tractor trailer. (*Actual date of incident removed by MIFACE*)

Among other methods, one feasible and acceptable abatement method to correct this hazard is to guard the ladder by a temporary barricade, such as a row of traffic cones or caution tape, to keep the activities or traffic away from the ladder.