

## INCIDENT FACTS

### REPORT #:

22MI112

### REPORT DATE:

May 31 2024

### INCIDENT DATE:

August 15, 2022

### WORKER:

62-year-old

### INDUSTRY:

Flooring Contractor

### OCCUPATION:

Owner/Operator

### EVENT TYPE:

Fall (from elevation)

## Owner Suffers Fatal Fall While Changing a Lightbulb

### SUMMARY

A 62-year-old worker suffered a fatal head injury in a fall from a 4-foot step ladder, while replacing fluorescent bulbs in an overhead light fixture in the flooring store he owned and operated for 32 years.

On the day of the incident, he was working alone to replace the overhead fluorescent bulbs at the showroom entrance from the shop/warehouse. A nearby wooden step from the floor up to the landing was 8-10 inches high. He utilized a well-maintained 4-foot Werner fiberglass stepladder with a 225-pound capacity to reach the ceiling level lightbulbs positioned 87 inches (7.25 feet) above the landing. The rated load of the ladder was adequate for the weight of the victim, tools, and equipment. Additionally, the step ladder had a maximum reach distance of 8 feet. While working overhead, he fell off the ladder, striking his head on the cement floor below. A bystander found the owner unconscious, and there were no witnesses to the fall. It is hypothesized that the decedent may have overreached on the ladder while changing the bulb, or that he may have placed the feet of his ladder too close to the edge of the concrete landing leading to the outside door. It also may be a combination of these factors.



Overview of work area. The approximate location of the feet of the stepladder at the time of the incident is represented by red markings.

Emergency medical services were called and first-aid was administered by EMS. He was transported to the hospital and later pronounced deceased.

### REQUIREMENTS

Employers must:

- Provide a training program for each employee who uses a ladder. The program shall enable each employee to recognize hazards related to the ladder and shall train each employee in the procedures to be followed to minimize these hazards. See [408.41112\(1\)](#)

### RECOMMENDATIONS

**MIFACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:**

- Training and Hazard Recognition
  - Ensure thorough training for employees on ladder safety, emphasizing the selection of the appropriate ladder for the task, regular inspection, and recognition of hazards. Train workers to maintain stability, avoid leaning or reaching away from the ladder, and always maintain three points of contact while ascending or descending.
- Ladder Selection and Inspection
  - Prioritize the selection of ladders suitable for the task and ensure they are inspected before each use. Verify that the ladder's weight capacity is adequate and that all components, including spreaders, are in good condition. Inspect the surrounding area for obstructions and ensure the ladder is placed on a firm, level surface.



Stepladder position.



Florescent lightbulb.

[MIFACE](#) (Michigan Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation), Michigan State University (MSU) Occupational & Environmental Medicine, 909 Fee Road, 117 West Fee Hall, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1315.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS CONTINUED...

- Work Environment Preparation
  - Create a clutter-free work environment around the ladder and ensure it is positioned away from any potential hazards or obstructions. Consider the use of a work partner to hold and steady the ladder during tasks.
- Utilization of Fall Protection and Equipment
  - Provide appropriate fall protection equipment and select the right tools for the job, including ladders, scaffolds, etc. Consider alternative equipment such as mobile work platforms with guardrails for tasks requiring overhead work, ensuring workers can maintain stability and use both hands effectively.
- Compliance with Standards
  - Adhere to relevant regulatory standards such as 1910.23 for ladder use in General Industry and 408.41112 for Construction. Adhere to provisions regarding ladder stability, maximum height, and limitations on standing positions.

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## CITATIONS

Although no citations were ultimately issued by the MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division, there was failure to report the fatality as per 408.22139(I) Recording/Reporting within 8 hours. Furthermore, a Notice of Potential Hazard (1910.25 Stairways) was issued due to an improvised wooden step not meeting required tread depth standards.