

**REPORT #:**  
25MI025

**REPORT DATE:**  
05/04/2026

**INCIDENT DATE:**  
Winter 2025

**WORKER:**  
29 years old

**INDUSTRY:**  
238160 – Roofing Contractors

**OCCUPATION:**  
Roofer

**SCENE:**  
Residential construction site

**LOCATION:**  
Traverse City, Michigan

**EVENT TYPE:**  
Fall from height

## CONSTRUCTION FATALITY NARRATIVE

### Residential Roofer Falls 25 Feet Removing Tarp

#### SUMMARY

At around 9:49 am a 29-year-old roofer fell 20-25 feet to the ground on the side of a residential home sustaining fatal cranial and cervical fractures. The roof was a steep roof with 8 in 12 pitch (vertical to horizontal). The plywood roof sheathing was fully tarped and had some snow on it. The ground was frozen and snow-covered. Historical weather data at the time of the fall shows the outside temperature was 20 degrees F and wind speed 10 mph (Source Weather Underground). The victim went on the roof to cut and remove the tarp and sweep off the snow so that the crew could install a shingle roof. The tarp was held on to the roof using 2x4 pieces of scrap wood attached to the side edges of the roof. While cutting off the last part of the tarp near the roof edge, a wind gust reportedly caught the tarp, and the victim fell 20-25 feet onto their head. It was not clear if the fall was witnessed. Other employees heard a scream. The victim was found wearing a body harness but was not connected to a lanyard or lifeline. Co-workers pounded on the homeowner's truck window attempting to get his assistance, as the company owner was not on site. The homeowner followed the workers to where the victim was lying, and initiated CPR after calling 911. CPR was taken over by a fire department ambulance crew, but the victim was pronounced deceased at the worksite. The cause of death was multiple blunt force injuries, and manner of death was accidental. A drug and alcohol panel was negative for all substances. The homeowner spoke only English. The roofing company owner spoke English and Spanish but had left the site. The workers including the victim spoke only Spanish. The owner of the company supplied body harnesses but did not verify use.



The tarp involved and victim's impact location (red circle) located on the right side of the house when facing the front. The yellow arrow indicates 2x4 sections used to attach and hold tarp on. Photo source: police photos.



Front of house before tarp removal began. The tarp had to be cut at roof edge where scrap 2x4 was attached and holding it. The grey block excludes employees. Photo source: police photos.

## SUMMARY CONTINUED

Anchorage and lifelines were not installed when the employee removed the tarp and fell. It is not clear if anyone on site was a trained competent person for fall protection. The owner, who left the site before the worker fell, told police he had not worked with the victim before arriving at the site.

## REQUIREMENTS

### **MIOSHA issued the following citations to address the hazardous condition:**

- 1926.501(b)(13): CS PART 45, FALL PROTECTION [REF 408.44502]  
Each employee engaged in residential construction activities 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above lower levels shall be protected by guardrail systems, safety net system, or personal fall arrest system unless another provision in paragraph (b) of this section provides for an alternative fall protection measure:  
*A roofing worker engaged in roofing activities on a high slope roof, without an anchor point, fell more than 6 feet to the ground.*
- 1926.503(a)(1): CS PART 45, FALL PROTECTION [REF 408.44502]  
The employer shall provide a training program for each employee who might be exposed to fall hazards. The program shall enable each employee to recognize the hazards of falling and shall train each employee in the procedures to be followed in order to minimize these hazards.  
*No fall protection training program was established.*

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### **To prevent a fall from height during work on a steep sloped roof, including removal of temporary coverings, MIFACE recommends employers should:**

- Always ensure employees in construction are protected by a fall protection system when exposed to fall hazards including roof edges or openings or at any heights more than 6 feet from a lower level.
- Identify all job steps that involve fall exposure. Ensure the protection system is in place before work begins.
- Seek assistance from an equipment manufacturer's technical representative or safety professional if needed to help choose the correct fall protection system.
- Develop work rules for when fall protection is required and communicate them to employees.
- Ensure all fall protection components including anchors and connections are installed according to manufacturer requirements before roofing work begins.
- Ensure a competent person trains all employees on fall hazards and proper use of personal fall arrest system components. Training **should** be in a language **understood** by the employees.

## RESOURCES

MIOSHA [2015a]. [Construction Safety Division, Part 45 - Fall Protection](#). Lansing, MI: Michigan Occupational safety and Health Administration.

MIFACE [2019]. [Construction Fall Hazard Alert](#). Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Department of Medicine, Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.

MIOSHA [2023]. [Residential Fall Protection Fact Sheet](#). Lansing, MI: Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration

MIOSHA [2023]. [Personal Fall Arrest Systems Tool Box Talk](#). Lansing, MI: Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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