

**Case 513. 23-year-old laborer died when he fell 30 feet from an extension ladder while removing a holiday wreath from a residence.**

A 23-year-old male laborer died when he fell 30 feet from an extension ladder while removing a holiday wreath from a residence. The decedent placed the ladder at the appropriate angle away from the home but did not ensure the ladder's safety feet were in contact with the ground. The sequence of events leading to the fall was unwitnessed. Several hypotheses include that the decedent was leaning outside of the rails to reach for the wreath and/or holiday light clips, or that he removed the wreath and the weight of the wreath (15 pounds) caused him to lose his balance as he was lifting or bringing the wreath back towards the ladder. Coworkers heard the decedent utter an expletive. The decedent landed feet first in the mulch around the home and then fall to the cement sidewalk. The ladder stayed upright. Emergency response was called, and the decedent was transported to a nearby hospital where he died five days later.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citation to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.

**Serious:** 1910.23(b)(13): GI PART 2, WALKING-WORKING SURFACES [REF 408.10202]

The employer must ensure no employee carries any object or load that could cause the employee to lose balance and fall while climbing up or down the ladder.

An employee fell off a ladder when removing a wreath from a customer's home.