

Case 104. 53-year-old male laborer died after stepping off a second floor platform edge and falling 12 feet to the concrete floor below.

On November 5, 2005, a 53-year-old male laborer died after stepping off a second floor platform edge and falling 12 feet to the concrete floor below. The deceased was a member of a four-person crew that was moving office chairs from a second floor office to the first floor warehouse area. The upstairs office door opened onto a platform, which had stairs that accessed the platform from the first floor. The stairs ran parallel to the office walls. On the other end of the platform another set of stairs continued to a third level. The platform was 40 inches as measured out from the office wall, about 7 ½ feet long, and 12 feet above the first floor. The platform had a removable standard barrier section that extended between the two sets of stairs; the removable section was about 7 feet 2 inches long and 34 inches high. The stairs that accessed the platform from the lower floor were on the south end of the platform, the removable standard barrier was on the east side of the platform and the office door was on the west side of the platform. The employees were loading office chairs into a poly pallet with sides called a Ropak. The pallet was about 47 ½ inches long, about 45 inches wide and 34 inches high. A forklift set the Ropak onto the platform through the removable section of the standard barrier. The Ropak was placed so that the 45-inch wide front of the Ropak was against the second floor office doorway. The removable section of standard barrier was not replaced while employees were loading the Ropaks due to the width of the platform. Supervision instructed the workers emptying the office of furniture not to step outside onto the platform. The Ropak that the victim was loading at the time of the incident was placed on an angle on the platform leaving about a one-foot opening between the Ropak and the north side of the doorway. The victim, carrying a chair, stepped outside of the office door onto the north side of the Ropak where he stepped off the edge of the platform. He lost his balance and fell approximately 12 feet to the concrete floor below, landing on his back and shoulders. 911 was called he was taken to a local hospital and declared dead later that day.

MIOSHA issued the following 2 Serious citations to the employer:

Serious:

ACT 154 PA OF 1974, SEC. 11(a)

Furnish to each employee employment and a place of employment which is free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to the employee in that the employer allowed employees to load office chairs on pallets and Ropak containers on unprotected platform exposing employees to falls to the cement floor below.

MIOSHA states among other methods, one feasible and acceptable abatement method to correct this hazard is to assure the Standard Barrier is in place during loading or to provide and enforce the use of the Fall Protection System.

Serious:

FLOOR & WALL OPENINGS, STAIRWAYS & SKYLIGHTS, PART 2, RULE 213(2)

Guard open-sided floor or platform 4 or more feet above adjacent level with a standard barrier constructed as specified in rules 230, 231 and 233(2).

Inadequate standard barrier, top rail 34 inches above platform, upstairs office platform removable barrier- Outside second floor office.