

Case 205. 24-year-old construction worker for a demolition company died after falling 189 feet down an elevator shaft as he was attempting to untangle an air compressor hose.

A 24-year-old male construction worker for a demolition company died after falling 189 feet down an elevator shaft as he was attempting to untangle an air compressor hose. The decedent and his coworker had completed the demolition of the elevator shaft, leaving four metal rails 48-inches in height as tie off points and as posts for a guardrail system around the open shaft. Three of four sides of the elevator shaft were unprotected. The decedent and his coworker were in the process of moving equipment to another floor. The decedent, who was wearing a safety harness but had not connected to a lanyard, was walking backwards stretching the air hose. The employer required a 100% tie-off in this work area. The decedent was declared dead at the scene.

At the conclusion of its investigation, the MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations:

SERIOUS:

FALL PROTECTION, PART 45, RULE 4502, REF OSHA 1926.501(b)(1)

Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest system.

Employees not protected from falling approximately 189 feet down an elevator shaft while performing demolition work activities. Guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems were not in use at the time of the accident.

FALL PROTECTION, PART 45, RULE 4502, REF OSHA 1926.501(b)(15)

Except as provided in 1926.500(a)(2) or in 1916.501 (b)(1) through (b)(14), each employee on a walking/working surface 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest system.

Employees were not protected from falling approximately 8 feet down a stairwell while performing demolition work activities. Guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall arrest systems were not in use at the time of the accident.