

Case 268. 48-year-old independent contractor died as a result of a fall of unknown height from a 20-foot fiberglass extension ladder equipped with safety feet.

A 48-year-old male independent contractor died as a result of a fall of unknown height from a 20-foot fiberglass extension ladder equipped with safety feet. The decedent was outside checking an outside light located approximately 21 feet above the ground lighting a loading dock truck bay. He was instructed to check the light for power by covering the photo eye with his glove. The decedent fell to concrete pavement and struck his head. A police interview statement from his coworker indicated that the decedent had a habit of moving his ladder while still on it to move to another location. The coworker assumed that the decedent had attempted to do that this time causing him to fall. Responding police found the extension ladder laying flat on the ground next to the building. A broken light housing, light bulb and voltmeter was lying near the decedent. A cordless drill/screwgun was wedged between a conduit pipe and the back wall of the building near the light fixture the decedent was apparently working on. Two wires that spanned the rear of the building were partially pulled away from their attachment points on the building.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division could not establish an employer/employee relationship as the decedent was an independent sub-contractor; therefore, no citations were issued.