

Case 286. 32-year-old carpenter for a roofing company died when the 18-foot-long metal piece of roofing material he was holding contacted a 4,800-volt overhead power line.

A 32-year-old male carpenter for a roofing company died when the 18-foot-long metal piece of roofing material he was holding contacted an energized 4,800-volt overhead power line. The decedent was standing on the 4/12 pitched roof that was 10 feet high at its edge and 15 feet 6 inches high at the peak. The overhead power line had a neutral line (closest to the building) and the 4,800-volt energized line. The energized line was 17 feet above the ground. MIOSHA measured the distance from the building edge (not the roof edge) to the energized line; the distance was 4 feet 3 inches. The decedent was a member of a three-person work crew reroofing a pole barn. One crew member was on the opposite side of the roof performing another task. One crew member was on the ground. The MIOSHA compliance officer indicated that the company owner stated he told the employees about the line and to be careful when working in the area. The owner did not try to have the power line removed, raised or de-energized while employees were working in the area. The decedent was in the process of installing a new corner trim on the building side near the power line. The corner was made of 29-gauge steel and was approximately 18 feet 6 inches long. After getting it to the roof, it appears that it was “backwards” and the decedent was required to turn the corner trim end for end. Instead of flipping it horizontally, it appears he turned it vertically, and the corner trim contacted the energized line. The coworker on the roof heard a buzzing noise and went to investigate. He found the decedent lying on the ground. The workers called for emergency response. EMS transported the decedent to a local hospital where he was declared dead.

MIOSHA Construction Safety and Health Division issued the following Serious citations at the conclusion of its investigation.

SERIOUS: GENERAL RULES, PART 1

- **RULE 114(1):**

An accident prevention program was not developed, maintained, and coordinated with employees.--

Instance 1: Employer did not have a developed accident prevention program to properly identify hazards associated with working on a construction site.

Instance 2: Electrical hazards on the job site were not identified and properly guarded against accidental employee contact.

Instance 3: Employees were not provided fall protection training that would enable them to properly identify hazards associated with working at heights above six feet.

- RULE 115(4):

An employee was working or allowed closer to energized electrical line, gear, or equipment exposed to contact than the minimum clearance prescribed in table 1.--

Employees were engaged in roofing activities on a construction site and exposed to a 4800 volt power line approximately 17 feet above the ground and 7 feet above the roof.

SERIOUS: FALL PROTECTION, PART 45, RULE 4502, REF OSHA 1926.501(b)(10):

Roofing work on low-slope roofs. Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b) of this section, each employee engaged in roofing activities on low-slope roofs, with unprotected sides and edges 6 feet (1.8m) or more above lower levels shall be protected from falling by guardrail systems, or a combination of warning line system and guardrail system, warning line system and safety net system, or warning line system and personal fall arrest system, or warning line system and safety monitoring system. Or, on roofs 50-feet (15.25m) or less in width (see Appendix A to subpart M of this part), the use of a safety monitoring system alone {i.e. without the warning line system} is permitted.--

No conventional acceptable alternative methods of all protection were provided to employees engaged in roofing operations. Employees were exposed to falling approximately 10 feet to ground.