

Case 328. 43-year-old sheet metal fabricator died when he fell approximately 30 feet through an unguarded/unprotected, plastic dome-type skylight to equipment/concrete floor.

A 43-year-old male sheet metal fabricator died when he fell approximately 30 feet through an unguarded/unprotected, plastic dome-type skylight to equipment/concrete floor. The skylight involved had a plastic convex dome that measured approximately 22 inches wide by 45 inches long. The dome was positioned on top of a 55-inch square, 10-12-inch high metal curb. Ten feet east of the skylight was a ladder/catwalk roof access attached to a ground level dust collector. The decedent used this access point to climb to the roof. The roof surface was dry and covered with a thin layer of debris consistent with buildup from years of weather. Company A had awarded an industrial dust collector system relocation project to the decedent's employer. The decedent was present at the site to make take final measurements, review blueprints, and inspect the jobsite in preparation for relocating the dust collector. After meeting with Company A personnel, he indicated he had obtained the needed information. Company A personnel believed he had left the site. The decedent instead proceeded to the location of the soon-to-be relocated dust collector. He accessed the roof via this dust collector's fixed ladder and a catwalk/stairway. On the roof at the east base of the skylight was a five gallon bucket metal lid. The lid was placed top side down with the metal tabs used to secure the lid to the bucket facing upwards. Scuff marks on the roof indicated that the lid had recently been moved. There was a corresponding scuff mark next to the lid as well as two scuff marks on the vertical portion of the skylight assembly. The sheriff department also noted footprints on the east side of skylight in the dust and finger marks were noted on the south side of skylight curb. The responding sheriff agency speculated that the decedent stepped on the lid, slipped/tripped, lost his balance and fell through the skylight, 29'4" to the floor. The decedent was found by a Company A employee who was driving a forklift through the area. The employee called for assistance. Another employee called for emergency response. The decedent was declared dead at the scene. After the decedent was found, an employee from Company A went to the roof to determine there were other issues on the roof. He found the decedent's phone west of the skylight. The responding sheriff determined the phone was in camera mode, and no texts or phone messages had been made/received. Located near the decedent on the floor were the decedent's hard hat, tape measure, and notepad.

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

SERIOUS: GENERAL RULES, PART 1, RULE 114(2)(c)

Instructions were not provided to each employee in the recognition and avoidance of hazards and the regulations applicable to his or her work environment to control or eliminate any hazards or other exposure to illness or injury.

Employees not properly instructed of hazards related to walking and working around skylights.