

Case 343. 51-year-old HVAC repairman died when he fell an unknown distance but, based on scene conditions, approximately 10-12 feet from a ladder.

A 51-year-old male HVAC repairman died when he fell an unknown distance but, based on scene conditions, approximately 10-12 feet from a ladder. The decedent was dispatched to a facility to service a walk-in cooler. He appropriately placed a new Werner, 28-foot fiberglass extension ladder against the building so he could look at the roof-mounted condenser unit associated with the walk-in cooler. The roof height was approximately 14 feet. The ladder safety feet were adequately positioned with the safety feet prongs buried in the snow and ice. The ladder was properly extended above the roof. The ladder had a rubber bungee tie down strap looped around the 5th rung from top of ladder but the strap was not secured to the building or piping at top edge of roof. It is unknown if he was climbing up or descending from the ladder when the fall occurred. The condenser unit associated with the cooler was approximately six feet away from the edge of the roof. There were no footprints in the snow on the roof. The ladder did not move from its original position when he had his unwitnessed fall. Investigation found that the third and fourth ladder rungs were dented. Weather conditions at the time of the incident were described as blowing snow. The cause and distance of the fall were unknown, although based on scene condition, approximately 10-12 feet. He was found deceased at the base of the ladder by a customer. The decedent had received ladder training from his employer approximately two months prior to the incident.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division did not issue any citations to the employer at the conclusion of its investigation.