

Case 383. 53-year-old maintenance manager died when he fell 20'6" through an unguarded 5'6" by 6'7" hole in a tower assembly for machinery.

A 53-year-old male maintenance manager died when he fell 20'6" through an unguarded 5'6" by 6'7" hole in a tower assembly for machinery. The tower assembly had three elevations; ground floor (first elevation), first floor (second elevation) and second floor (third elevation). The decedent was one of three persons representing three different contractors having a meeting at the third elevation walking surface to discuss mechanical piping and ducting that was to be installed for machinery. Responding police interviews stated that the decedent had walked behind some machinery and was looking up, walking backward when he fell through the unguarded hole. Another developed scenario was that the decedent was on his knees taking measurements around the incident hole opening for the installation of rings that the machine would be placed on, and when he got up, he either lost his balance or he walked backwards into the hole. He attempted to catch himself but was unsuccessful and fell 20'6" to the concrete floor below. The decedent's employer had installed some covers over open third elevation holes adjacent to where machines were being installed. Emergency response was called and transported the decedent to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead.

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

SERIOUS: GENERAL RULES, CS PART 1, RULE 408.40114(1):

An employer shall develop, maintain, and coordinate with employees an accident prevention program, a copy of which shall be available at the worksite.

The decedent's employer was acting in a General Contractor capacity. Employees exposed to construction related hazards such as, but not limited to; falls, hole openings, and lack of specialized training to recognize these hazards. The company, a manufacturing-type company, has limited scope as it relates to new construction within their safety program modules. (MIFACE removed the company name and substituted the italicized text).

(Machinery installation activities were taking place at *the decedent's employer* new corporate headquarters)

SERIOUS: STEEL ERECTION, CS PART 26, RULE 408.42645(1):

Except as provided by sub-rule (3) of this rule, each employee engaged in a steel erection activity who is on a walking/working surface with an unprotected side or edge more than 15 feet (4.6 m) above a lower level shall be protected from fall hazards by guardrail systems, safety net systems, personal fall arrest systems, positioning device systems, or fall restraint systems.

Acting as a controlling entity and exposing employer, the contractor did not provide adequate fall protection at the third level haul-off openings on the manufacturing towers.

Employees of *the decedent's employer* and other sub-contractors are exposed to multiple unguarded hole openings on the third and elevation of the manufacturing tower. The potential fall ranged from 19'-6" to 26'-0" depending on location within the tower. The employee fell to his death at tower 12; the hole was 5'-6" X 6' -7" in size and the fall was 20'-6" to the concrete below. The employee was not using P.F.A.S. (*personal fall arrest system*) and no guardrails, hole covers, or other fall protection methods were provided.

- Instance A: "CAUTION" tape provided at various locations around the manufacturing tower.
- Instance B: Two (2) inadequate hole covers provided at third elevation.

(Machinery installation activities were taking place at *the decedent's employer* new corporate headquarters)