

Case 419. 49-year-old tree removal company owner died when a limb split and fell onto the bucket of the bucket truck positioned 55 feet in the air causing him to be catapulted from the bucket.

A 49-year-old tree removal company owner died when a limb split and fell onto the bucket of the bucket truck positioned 55 feet in the air causing him to be catapulted from the bucket. The decedent was trimming a large oak tree at a private residence. The decedent tied a rope around the front rack of his bucket truck, laid the rope through a limb crotch of a nearby tree, and then around the 6-inch diameter, 15-foot long vertical limb that he was planning to cut. While cutting the limb with a chainsaw, the limb split and broke off, falling onto the bucket and dropping over the right side of the truck boom, pulling down on the bucket and catapulting the decedent, who was not wearing fall protection, to the ground. The decedent landed on his back on a pile of previously cut limbs. Emergency response was called. The decedent was declared dead at the scene.

MIOSHA General Industry Safety and Health Division did not issue a citation to the employer – he was the sole owner and the business closed.