

Animal Caretaker Breaks Arm and Wrist After Ladder Fall

Industry: Pet Care

Task: Gathering Hay

Release Date: July 13, 2011

Occupation: Animal Caretaker

A 23-year-old animal caretaker manager broke her right wrist and left forearm after falling about 15 feet from an extension ladder. The caretaker was climbing down the ladder after gathering hay to feed some animals. While on her way down, the ladder collapsed and slid away from the wall that it was leaning on. The ladder and victim then fell to the concrete ground below. Neither the locking device for the rungs, nor the top of the ladder, was secure. The victim said that she did not inspect the ladder before using it because it had already been setup by a coworker. Although climbing a ladder to the hay loft was a routine job duty, the caretaker had not received any training on how to properly set up and use an extension ladder. A week prior to her injury she had talked with her supervisor about obtaining a new ladder due to the age and condition of the current one. Due to her injuries she was unable to take care of herself and moved back in with her parents. "I had to be taken care of like I was a toddler" she said. She has yet to regain full use of her arms.



Employer Requirements

- Train employees to recognize hazards and steps to reduce them. See [WAC 296-876-15005](#).
- Set up ladders at a safe angle, approximately one foot out for every four feet up. See [WAC 296-876-40020](#).
- If a ladder that is used to access an upper level doesn't extend at least three feet above the landing, then secure the ladder at the top to a rigid support and provide a grasping device to safely assist workers in transitioning on and off the ladder. See [WAC 296-876-40030](#).
- Tag and remove all defective ladders for repair. See [WAC 296-876-3005](#).
- See [Ladders, Portable and Fixed - WAC 296-876-400](#) for Washington ladder regulations (except agriculture).

Recommendations

- Do not use a ladder unless you have been properly trained.
- Always inspect the ladder before using to ensure that it is in good working condition. Do not use it if it has any defects.
- When using an extension ladder, check to see that the extension locks are in place and working.
- Whenever possible, redesign tasks so work does not need to be done at an elevated height.

Resources

- Free workplace safety and health consultations are available from L&I at: www.SafetyConsultants.lni.wa.gov
- For more ladder safety tips go to L&I's [Ladder Safety](#) webpage, or go to OSHA's [Portable Ladder Safety QuickCard](#).

Need more information?

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