

Commercial Roofer Falls, Breaks Leg When Ladder Slips

Industry: Roofing
Task: Working from ladder

Release Date: July 17, 2011
Occupation: Laborer

A 21-year-old experienced commercial roofer broke his leg after falling 13 feet from a ladder. The ladder, which had worn rubber soles on the feet, was being used inside on a log cabin floor covered with sawdust. There was no toe board or other device at the foot of the ladder to prevent it from slipping. As the ladder slid out from underneath the worker, he ‘surfed’ down the ladder and his left leg was caught between two rungs. Both bones in his lower leg broke as he fell to the ground. At the time of the injury the worker was working with two other roofers. The roofer reported having too much weight at the top of the ladder.



Employer Requirements

- Set up ladders at a safe angle, approximately one foot out for every 4 feet up. See [WAC 296-876-40020](#).
- When working with ladders, make sure to secure the top and the bottom of the ladder. See [WAC 296-876-40040](#).
- Hold onto the ladder with both hands when climbing up or down. See [WAC 296-876-40025](#).
- Do not overload ladders by exceeding either maximum intended load, or the manufacturer’s rated capacity. See [WAC 296-876-40050](#).
- Employees should be trained to recognize hazards and steps to reduce them. See [WAC 296-876-15005](#)
- For all Washington ladder regulations (except agriculture) see [Ladders, Portable and Fixed - WAC 296-876-400](#).

Recommendations

- Always inspect and ensure that ladders are in good working condition before using. Do not use any ladder that has a defect.
- Inspect the surfaces where ladders will be used to ensure that they are dry and free of dust or other slipping hazards.
- Do not use ladders unless you are properly trained.

Resources

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

Need more information?

Please contact Eric Jalonen,
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