



# FATALITY NARRATIVE

## Painter Falls from Stepladder\*

**Industry:** Painting contractors  
**Task:** Spray painting ceiling  
**Occupation:** Painter  
**Type of Incident:** Fall from ladder

**Release Date:** May 21, 2012  
**Incident Date:** October 12, 2010  
**Case No.:** 11WA00801  
**SHARP Report No.:** 71-110-2012

On October 12, 2010, a painter died when he fell from a stepladder. The 57-year-old self-employed painter was working alone at a newly constructed house. He was standing on an aluminum stepladder spray painting the ceiling. The incident was unwitnessed, but according to the police report, he apparently fell from the ladder down into a stairwell, where he landed about 25 to 30 feet below. He was taken to a hospital, where he died.

**Falls from ladders killed 19 workers in the construction trades in Washington State between 1998 and 2011.**



### Requirements

- Ensure that stepladders are fully opened with the spreaders locked. See WAC 296-876-40050.
- Do not stand or step on the top cap and top step of a stepladder. See WAC 296-876-40050.
- Train employees to recognize ladder hazards and how to minimize these hazards. See WAC 296-876-15005.
- Keep ladders in good, usable condition and remove from service any ladders with structural defects. See WAC 296-876-30005.
- Workers conducting a task from a ladder greater than 25 feet must either use fall protection or find another method of access if the work requires the use of both hands. See WAC 296-876-40040.

### Recommendations

- Choose the right equipment for the task:
  - Select an appropriate ladder length, type, and strength.
  - A scaffold or elevating work platform, such as a scissor lift, may be a safer alternative to a ladder.
  - Consider using a spray gun extension pole when painting a ceiling or areas over a stairwell.
- Place a stepladder on a solid, level surface.
- Before using a ladder, inspect it to make sure it is in good condition.

**Statewide Statistics:** This was number 74 of 89 work-related fatalities in Washington State during 2010, and was number 7 of 7 construction-related fatalities.

*\*This bulletin was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.*

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