

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-198-2020

REPORT DATE:

August 10, 2020

INCIDENT DATE:

September 4, 2019

VICTIM:

39 years old

INDUSTRY:

Framing contractors

OCCUPATION:

Framer

SCENE:

Multi-story residential/office building under construction

EVENT TYPE:

Fall



Stairwell opening where workers had recently removed a plywood cover.

[For a slideshow version, click here.](#)



This narrative is an alert about the tragic loss of life of a worker and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or the cause of the fatality. Developed by WA State Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), WA State Dept. of Labor & Industries. The FACE Program is supported in part by a grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH grant# 5U60OH008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.

Framer Falls 20 Feet through Stairwell Opening

SUMMARY

A 39-year-old framer died when he fell 20 feet through a stairwell opening in the second floor deck of a building under construction.

The framer's employer was a framing contractor that was acting as a subcontractor responsible for framing a multi-story residential/office building. On the day of the incident, the framer was part of a crew of three workers doing various tasks on the building's recently completed second floor deck.

A stairwell opening, fully decked with a plywood cover, was located near where the crew was working. By about 9:30 a.m., a subcontractor's workers had erected guardrails in preparation for removal of the decking. By shortly after 11 a.m., the subcontractor had removed decking from the stairwell opening. At noon, the framer and his coworkers broke for lunch. They gathered a few yards from the stairwell opening.

No one observed what happened next, but a time-lapse security camera captured the movements of the framer. He walked toward the stairwell, climbed through the guardrail, and stood on the opening's inner concrete ledge. He then fell into the stairwell opening, landing on concrete 20 feet below. First responders took him to a hospital where he later died.

Investigators do not know why the framer entered the area behind the guardrails. He had no work to do in this area. Investigators speculated that he went there to sit on the ledge and eat his lunch. It is possible that he had been in this area earlier in the day when it was safe to be there and he had not realized that workers had removed the decking cover. First responders found a bag containing a lunch near his body.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

- This tragic fatality could have been prevented if the worker had not gone on the other side of the safety guardrail system without the use of fall protection.



Stairwell opening the framer fell through.