

**INCIDENT FACTS**

**REPORT #:**

71-208-2021

**REPORT DATE:**

August 30, 2021

**INCIDENT DATE:**

January 11, 2020

**WORKER:**

41 years old

**INDUSTRY:**

New single family housing construction

**OCCUPATION:**

Laborer

**SCENE:**

Single family home under construction-framing

**EVENT TYPE:**

Fall



View of the wall from which the laborer fell. A roof truss is marked with a red flag.



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](http://www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face).

**Laborer Falls from Wall while Setting Trusses**

**SUMMARY**

A 41-year-old laborer died when he fell from the top plate of a framed wall of a home under construction.

He was working with two others installing roof trusses on a single-story home. His employer was a subcontractor. This was his first day on the jobsite and he was hired two days before. In the past, he had worked on other construction jobs. The crew arrived on site in the morning and it rained early in the day. The employer did not hold a safety meeting prior to starting the job.

The laborer used an extension ladder to climb onto the 2" x 6" top plate of a framed wall. He was standing on the top plate guiding roof trusses into position while his coworker was on the ground supporting the trusses. Shortly after 3 p.m. they were positioning a truss when, according to the coworker, the laborer fell backward from the top plate and landed 9'7" on the dirt below. He was not wearing fall protection or a hard hat. The other coworker was cleaning up the site and did not witness the fall.

After he fell, the coworker administered CPR and yelled to the other worker to call 911. He was able to revive the laborer before he was airlifted to the hospital. He died the next day due to blunt force head injuries suffered in his fall.

Investigators found: **1)** The employer had not held a safety meeting or conducted a walk-around safety inspection prior to the start of the job. **2)** The employer had fall protection on site, but the laborer was not wearing it. **3)** The laborer was not required to use fall protection because the top plate was not a walking/working surface. Fall protection is required at a height of 10' or more when engaged in the erection or placement of structural members, including trusses. **4)** The first-aid certification of the worker who administered CPR had expired.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Employers must

- Hold and document crew leader-crew safety meetings and walk-around safety inspections at the beginning of each job, and at least weekly thereafter. See [WAC 296-155-110](http://WAC 296-155-110)

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

- Before beginning a job, perform a worksite hazard analysis to identify fall protection needs and ensure systems are in place to protect workers.
- Do not work while standing on top plates. They are not walking/working surfaces. Use mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs), scaffolds, or platform or step ladders.
- Always use fall protection when exposed to fall hazards and when working in MEWPs, regardless of height. A fall can be fatal from any height.
- Do not tie off directly to wood trusses unless a qualified person has determined that the truss or series of trusses will meet the strength requirements of a fall-arrest anchor.



Framed wall from which the laborer fell nearly 10 feet.