

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #:

71-211-2021

REPORT DATE:

October 29, 2021

INCIDENT DATE:

December 10, 2019

WORKER:

30 years old

INDUSTRY:

Roofing contractors

OCCUPATION:

Roofer

SCENE:

Warehouse interior

EVENT TYPE:

Fall/ladder



Roof access fixed ladder inside warehouse.

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



This narrative is an alert about the serious traumatic injury 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 injury. 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# 5U600H008487). For more information visit www.lni.wa.gov/safety-health/safety-research/ongoing-projects/work-related-fatalities-face.

Roofer Falls 10 Feet from Fixed Ladder

SUMMARY

A 30-year-old roofer was seriously injured after falling 10 feet from a fixed ladder used to gain access to a warehouse roof.

His employer was a roofing contractor hired by the general contractor to work on the roof of a newly constructed warehouse building.

As the building was nearing completion, the general contractor notified the roofing contractor that there was a leak in the roof. On the day of the incident, three roofing workers arrived at the building to repair the leak.

The general contractor superintendent offered them the use of a boom lift to access the roof. They did not have enough safety harnesses to use the lift. So at the suggestion of the superintendent, they decided to use a fixed ladder to gain access to the roof. The ladder was located in an electrical room inside the warehouse.

The 38-foot steel vertical fixed ladder had a metal cover at its bottom secured by a padlock, to prevent unauthorized access. The ladder also had a safety system installed on it consisting of a climbing trolley attached to an aluminum track or carrier located between the ladder's side rails. The trolley had a locking carabiner to which the climber can directly connect the front waist D-ring of their full body harness. The trolley moves with the climber and if they fall, it immediately arrests the fall.

The roofers did not have the required safety gear for the ladder, nor were they aware that they needed it. The superintendent then unlocked the ladder cover. One of the roofers climbed the ladder and went through a hatch onto the roof. Another roofer began climbing the ladder. Rainwater coming through the open roof hatch had made the ladder slippery, which caused him to lose his grip on a ladder rung. He then fell 10 feet to the plywood roof of the electrical room. He was hospitalized with injuries to his chest and legs.

Investigators found that none of the roofer's or the general contractor's employees were trained on how to use the fixed ladder and its safety system.

REQUIREMENTS

- Employers must train employees to recognize ladder hazards and the procedures to minimize these hazards. See [WAC 296-876-15005\(1\)](#).
- Climbing and descending fixed ladders. See [WAC 296-876-80010](#).
- Ladder safety devices. See [WAC 296-876-60080](#).

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACE investigators concluded that, to help prevent similar occurrences:

- Ensure that employees have safety equipment, systems, and devices required for assigned tasks and that they are trained on how to properly use them.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when using ladder safety systems.



Access point for fixed ladder used to access warehouse roof. At the time of the incident there was no sign indicating that fall protection was required to access the ladder.