On May 6, 2015, a 29-year-old orchard laborer fell from the elevated basket of an aerial lift and suffered a serious head injury. The laborer had five years’ experience working in orchards, two of which were with his employer’s orchard. He had received safety training relating to his job duties from his employer. During the growing season, his full-time duties included maintaining the orchard shade cloth system. Horizontal cable wires 17 to 20 feet high supported by poles allowed cloth to be rolled out like a curtain to provide shade for trees. He and other employees worked to extend and roll up the shade cloth as well as maintain the cable system that supports the cloth. On the day of the incident, the laborer was using a three-wheeled aerial lift to access the shade cloth system in order to roll out the cloth. He was working from the lift’s elevated basket. He had previously operated this type of lift. He was not using a fall protection harness with a lanyard attached to the basket. As he was manually moving the shade cloth, the supporting cable wire snapped and knocked him out of the basket. He fell 17 feet from the basket to the ground. He was knocked unconscious and taken to a hospital where he was diagnosed with a skull fracture and a traumatic brain injury. He suffered numerous complications related to his injury and was still unable to return to work more than a year later.

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