

Gutter Installer Falls from Patio Roof

INCIDENT FACTS

REPORT #: 71-255-2024s

REPORT DATE: June 10, 2024

INCIDENT DATE: September 20, 2022

WORKER: 34 years old

INDUSTRY: Siding Contractors

OCCUPATION: Gutter/Siding Installer

SCENE: Installing gutters on residence

EVENT TYPE: Fall from patio roof



FATALITY NARRATIVE



A 34-year-old installer and a coworker were installing gutters on a two-story residential home. They started the job at about 6 a.m.

The installer's first task was to prepare the upper roof edge in order to hang the gutters. He went to the back of the house and used a ladder to get onto the roof of the patio.

His coworker was in the front of the house forming the gutters they were going to hang.

While standing on the patio roof, the installer started prying between the upper roof shingles and the fascia in order to make a space to attach the gutter flashing.

As he continued prying toward the corner of the upper roof, he reached the edge of the patio roof on which he was standing.

He either did not see the patio roof edge and stepped off or was extending his reach and lost his balance. He fell 13 feet to the concrete patio.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



The employer, who had just arrived, and homeowner found him at approximately 7 a.m. on the patio with his pry bar nearby. He was wearing a tool belt but not the personal fall protection equipment that was available in the work truck.

Emergency responders declared him dead at the scene.

Following the incident, investigators the employer did not:

- Have a written accident prevention program (APP) or a fall protection work plan.
- Provide fall protection training or ensure workers used fall protection equipment.
- Document safety meetings.



Photo 1. The ladder the installer used to climb onto the patio roof in order to pry on the edge of the upper roof.



Photo 2. Upper roof above the patio where the installer was prying when he fell.



Photo 3. Edge of the patio roof where the installer was working and from where the fell, opposite from where the ladder was propped.



Photo 4. The pry bar the installer was using with a tape measure showing the distance the pry bar was found from him after he fell.

FATALITY NARRATIVE



Photo 5. The personal fall protection harness, lifeline, and lanyard that were available in the work truck.

Requirements

Employers must:

- Develop a formal, written APP. See [WAC 296-800-14005](#)
- Develop and implement a written fall protection work plan, including each area of the work place where the employees are assigned and where fall hazards of ten feet or more exist. See [WAC 296-880-10020\(1\)](#)

Requirements

Employers must:

- Ensure that each employee on a walking/working surface with an unprotected side or edge four feet or more above the ground or lower level is protected by a fall protection system. See [WAC 296-880-20005\(1\)](#)
- Provide training for each employee exposed to fall hazards. See [WAC 296-880-10015](#)
- Document attendance and subjects discussed at crew-leader safety meetings. See [WAC 296-155-110\(6\)](#)

Recommendations

FACE investigators concluded that to help prevent similar occurrences employers should:

- Arrive on-site before work begins or appoint a supervisor to ensure that workers use fall protection and follow fall prevention safe work practices.
- During the pre-job safety meeting, go over the fall protection work plan and discuss workers' responsibilities and the details of how they will implement the plan.
- Make fall prevention a company priority and emphasize to workers to always use fall protection when required.

Resources

Personal Fall Arrest Systems [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#). Washington State Department of Labor & Industries

FATALITY NARRATIVE



This narrative was developed to alert employers and workers of a tragic incident 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 injury.

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