

FATALGRAM

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: December 13, 2005

Construction Industry

A roofer slid off a two-story, residential garage and fell eighteen feet.

Description of Accident: Two roofing employees, working on a residential garage were tied-off to a ridge horizontal safety line with personal fall arrest systems (body harness/lanyard). At the end of the work shift, the victim climbed to the roof ridge line and disconnected both lanyards from the safety line. This employee attempted to scoot down the roof in a sitting position and began to slide on the ice. The victim's feet caught and broke through the eave slide guard. The employee fell eighteen feet to the ground.

Conclusion:

Investigation revealed several issues:

1. Extra lanyards were available on site--employees were removing the lanyards and safety line at night to prevent the lanyards and line from freezing and icing up, instead of replacing the frozen lanyards at start of the next workday, ensuring continuous fall protection.
2. Workers were not wearing grip-enhancing footwear on the icy surface.
3. The employer also was not using an alternative fall protection plan at the site.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that employees have continuous and conforming fall protection at all times.
- Employers should have a site specific fall protection plan and ensure employees understand the plan, can recognize hazards and how to use the fall arrest systems correctly.
- Conduct a site hazard assessment for each site to evaluate the need for additional personal protective equipment (PPE) and consider weather conditions
- Ensure that employees are trained to recognize when PPE, including traction devices are necessary.
- An employer should have a written safety program which includes enforcement and discipline procedures to ensure that employees follow the employer's safety requirements. The employer should take steps to discover employee violations and document disciplinary action taken.