

FATALGRAM

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: December 17, 2005

CONSTRUCTION

A pipefitter fell headfirst from an 8 foot ladder, breaking his neck. He was installing a pneumatic tube delivery system above the ceiling when he fell.

Description of Accident: The victim was up on a ladder connecting a pneumatic tube delivery system applying glue and tape to 4" pipe at about 11' above the floor. The victim was using a metal sealant which had a large quantity of volatile chemicals. Warnings on the sealant noted the possibility of dizziness and unconsciousness from off gassing fumes. The victim had previously commented on dizziness from using this sealant. At the time of the accident there was no respirator or fan being used. The victim was found to have fallen off the ladder, hitting the floor head first and breaking his neck.

Conclusion: Victim may have been overcome by fumes from pipe sealant, causing him to lose his balance and there is the possibility of ladder misuse by either being too high up the ladder or straddling the top of the ladder.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that workers using ladders are familiar with the types and rating of ladders appropriate for specific jobs and that they are used in a safe manner.
- A hazard awareness assessment should be done at the job site prior to starting work.
- When using chemical products, ensure that MSDS's are being followed by all employees as far as the proper personal protective equipment and proper engineering controls determined through a hazard awareness assessment.
- Certain pipe sealants can contain petroleum byproducts and solvents and will gas off fumes that can cause dizziness or unconsciousness.
- The use of fans or respirators might be necessary especially in warm confined spaces where fumes can concentrate.
- Avoid single-person jobs.
- 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.