

FATALGRAM

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Date of Accident: April 30, 2009

General

On April 30, 2009 an employee suffered a fatal fall between two boats that were under construction at an Anchorage boat yard.

Description of Incident:

On April 30, 2009 an employee was doing completion work on two boats that were positioned side by side on transport trailers. The employee was accessing the second vessel by stepping across a 12 inch gap when he fell between the two boats. Emergency Medical Services responded, stabilized the victim and transported to a local hospital. Due to the injuries sustained from the six-foot fall, the victim expired three days after the accident.

Alaska Occupational Safety and Health investigated the accident. Based on the investigation it appears the victim had sustained a head injury that became fatal due to a six foot fall to the ground. The boats had grab rails along the access areas with a non-skid walking surface on the deck. The employer had failed to ensure proper fall protection for employees that were exposed to this hazard, such as handrails on the walking working surface. The ground to deck primary boat access was within the safety standards for steps, stairs and railings. The employer's response to abatement was to stop the practice of accessing boats by stepping, or jumping the gap between multiple boats under construction.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Ensure that employees are trained to recognize fall hazards and to use fall protection measures.
- Ensure that walkways are used and are guarded with handrails and that walking/working surfaces over four feet from the lower level are guarded with guardrails.
- Ensure that written safety procedures and policies are followed.
- Ensure daily walk around inspections of the worksite are conducted to address fall hazards and other safety issues related to a changing work process like boat building.
- 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.