

FATALGRAM 11-03

Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development
Division of Labor & Safety Standards
Occupational Safety & Health



Date of incident: September 8, 2010

Industry: Material Handling & Warehousing

Location: Anchorage, Alaska

Summary: On September 8, 2010 an employee was fatally injured when she fell from a 14-foot mobile stair ladder. The victim struck the back of her head against the concrete floor.

Description of incident: The fatal accident occurred when the victim was tasked to retrieve merchandise from a 16-foot vertical shelving unit. The victim used a mobile stair ladder to reach the top shelf. The ladder had a badly worn rubber stop cap which caused the ladder to be unlevel and to rock whenever the brake was set. The victim was working alone while using the ladder. The victim lost her balance, fell backwards, and struck the back of her head against the concrete floor.

Alaska Occupational Safety & Health investigated the incident. The investigation revealed an approximate one-quarter inch difference in the two brake stop caps, due to one stop cap being badly worn. These stop caps are designed to keep the ladder from shifting while in use. The ladder had not been properly maintained based upon the badly worn rubber brake stop. In spite of manufacturer's recommendations, failure to do a pre-use ladder inspection was a contributing factor to this accident. Another contributing factor was the lack of employee training on the importance of what to look for during a ladder inspection prior to use.

Accident Prevention Recommendations:

- Train employees who use ladders on the importance of what to look for during a ladder inspection.
- Always conduct a ladder safety check prior to each use.
- Mark and remove all defective ladders and equipment from service immediately (by effectively tagging and physically removing equipment from employee access).
- Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for operations and maintenance of all equipment.