

TOOLBOX TALK #40

WORKER FALLS 18 FEET FROM WET ROOF

A 50-year-old roofer died when he fell 18 feet from a house roof. He had 20 years of experience as a roofer and had worked for his employer for two years. He was part of a 3-person crew installing a metal roof on a two-story house.

Shortly after 8 a.m., the crew was setting up for the day as light rain was falling. The victim, wearing a harness, climbed up a ladder and onto the roof, which had an 8:12 pitch. No one else was on the roof as he walked horizontally along it for about 25 feet. The crew supervisor was working below in the yard.

After a few minutes, the supervisor called to the victim, but received no answer. He went looking for the victim and found him lying unconscious on a concrete patio. The victim died while being transported to a hospital. The cause of death was listed as “multiple blunt force injuries” resulting from the fall. The state investigator found that the rope grab lifeline was attached to a roof anchor, but the victim wasn’t tied off to it when he slid on the wet roof underlayment and fell.

To help prevent similar incidents:

- Ensure workers exposed to fall hazards of 6 feet or higher while working on a roof with a pitch greater than 4:12 use one of the following systems:
 - Fall restraint
 - Fall arrest
 - Positioning device

- Ensure workers always use fall protection during roofing operations