

FATALITY NARRATIVE

Glazier Foreman Falls from Stepladder

Industry: Glass and Glazing Contractors
Task: Installing window
Occupation: Glazier foreman
Type of Incident: Fall from ladder

In December of 2015, a 58-year-old glazier foreman died of injuries after falling from a stepladder. The victim was employed by a glass and glazing contractor where he had worked for 30 years. His employer was subcontracted to install windows at a hospital. He was a foreman at the site overseeing two crew members. The day prior to the incident, an employee of the site general contractor informed the victim that one of his crew was using a stepladder improperly by standing on its top step with the ladder propped against a building in the closed position. On the day of the incident, members of the general contractor's crew saw the victim propping a stepladder over and across a stairwell, with the foot of the ladder placed against the outside railing and the top of the ladder leaning on a wall above the stairwell. They told him not to use the ladder like that. The victim was trying to reach a portion of the window located over the stairwell in order to finish removing tape that had been used when caulking was applied. He moved the ladder to the other side of the half wall above the stairwell and then placed the 8-foot stepladder against the building in its closed position. No one observed what

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Incident scene showing the 8-foot stepladder from which the victim fell over the wall into a stairwell below.

happened next, but ten minutes later the two employees who had warned him about the ladder found him seriously hurt at the bottom of the stairwell, where he had apparently fallen from the ladder. He had fallen 12 feet 8 inches. He was taken to a hospital with injuries to his spine and head. He died of his injuries six days later.

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Requirements

- Develop a formal accident prevention program that is tailored to address hazards associated with the employer's operations.
See [WAC 296-155-110\(2\)](#)
- Have a competent person train employees to recognize ladder hazards and the procedures to minimize these hazards and retrain as necessary. (For example, after learning to recognize ladder fall hazards, employees should be able to select the correct ladder for the job task.)
See [WAC 296-876-15005](#)
- Conduct walk-around safety inspections.
See [WAC 296-155-110\(9\)4](#)
- Make sure self-supporting ladders are not used as single ladders or in the partially closed position.
See [WAC 296-876-40050\(1\)](#)

Recommendations

- Pre-plan job tasks that require working at height so that they may be accomplished in the safest manner.
- Consider, if appropriate, using aerial lifts, elevating work platforms, or scaffolds instead of ladders.
- Create and enforce a policy addressing ladder safety issues.
- When using a ladder keep your body within the side rails. Do not lean or overreach, as this may cause you to overbalance and fall sideways off the ladder or pull the ladder sideways.

Resources

Ladder Safety, Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [Ladder Safety, WA L&I](#)



This narrative was developed to alert employers and employees of a tragic loss of life of a worker in Washington State and is based on preliminary data ONLY and does not represent final determinations regarding the nature of the incident or conclusions regarding the cause of the fatality.

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