Carpenter Dies After Falling from Extension Ladder



A 49-year-old male carpenter (victim) employed by a residential contractor was fatally injured after falling from an extension ladder. The victim and a co-worker were on site to perform gutter work on a house. The victim was climbing an extension ladder that was set up on stone pavers to access the roof.

While climbing the ladder, the victim fell to the ground below when the base of the ladder slipped out and the ladder fell to the left. The co-worker went to assist the victim, and both the co-worker and the homeowner called emergency medical services (EMS).

EMS and local police arrived within minutes. The victim was transported to a local hospital where he died 16 days later. At the time of the incident, the company the victim worked for did not have a safety and health program.

Contributing factors identified in the accident investigation included:

- Lack of a safety and health program.
- An incorrect ladder type/duty rating was being used.
- The ladder was overloaded and was set up on a surface that was not flat.

Final Word

Take the following steps to protect your workers from meeting a similar fate:

- Ensure the correct equipment, both types and ratings, are provided and used for the tasks being performed.
- Ensure ladders are set up properly before use and equipped with accessories that will help stabilize the ladder.
- Provide all employees with training on ladders, and other equipment such as scaffolding and aerial lifts, when they will be used to complete tasks.
- Develop, implement, and enforce a safety and health program that addresses hazard recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions.

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