



Fall Prevention

eSafetyLine

Case Study #3

Another situation that involves a variation of OSHA's 6 foot rule is when working on low slope roofs and/or working around holes in a roof. This case study involves an employee working on a skylight in a roof, which in OSHA's opinion is simply a hole in the roof. The roof in question was a low slope roof with a pitch of 2:12. The skylight had broken out and was in need of repair. The employee was on the roof removing pieces of the skylight, preparing the space for a replacement skylight. There was no fall protection in use at the site. The employee stepped on the remaining piece of skylight and fell through the skylight hole. The worker struck a vehicle lift inside the building as he fell. He landed 16 feet below on the concrete floor. Emergency medical services were called and transported the worker to the hospital where he later died from severe head and brain trauma.

At first glance it may seem that no fall protection would be needed to satisfy OSHA, the roof was a low slope roof minimally a warning line 6 feet from the roof edge was needed. However, since the employee was on the roof to replace a skylight (a hole) OSHA requires fall protection for anyone working near a skylight that is more than 6 feet above the lower level. The roof was at a distance of 16 feet above the lower surface so fall protection should have been in place. There are three possible ways to provide fall protection in this situation:

- A cover over the hole or skylight
- A guardrail system put up around the hole
- A personal fall arrest system.

Since the task at hand was to replace the skylight, neither covering the hole or a guardrail surrounding would allow the necessary work to take place. This leaves one possibility; a personal fall arrest system.

Although a warning line was in place 6 feet away from the edge of the roof as the OSHA standard directs the situation was not only about the roof edge. There was work occurring at a hole in the roof and this made the need for fall protection a bit more complex. The employer tried to do the right thing by the employees but needed to go a bit farther to protect the workers.

Discussion Questions

What was the major factor contributing to this accident?

What could have been done to prevent it?

MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: _____

_____ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: _____

_____ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: ___/___/_____

TIME: _____

TOPICS ADDRESSED: _____

EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: _____

ACTION TAKEN: _____

Supervisor's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date

Safety Coordinator's Signature

_____/_____/_____
Date