



TWO OLDER WORKERS DIE WHEN THEY FALL FROM LADDERS

Older workers (65+) have a greater risk of serious injury and death from falls. There are more older workers continuing to work, and they may have medical conditions or balance problems that increase the risk of falls.

Marco*, a 68-year-old school custodian, fell when he tried to reach a window that was too high for his step ladder. Jerry*, a 72-year-old grocery worker, died when he fell from a straight ladder that was wet with rain. Both were working alone washing windows or restocking shelves when they fell to the ground below.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

Marco and Jerry may not have known:
How to use a ladder safely;
That workers 65 years and older are at greater risk of injury and death due to falls.

Marco and Jerry may have lost their balance or slipped, causing them to fall.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Employers should make sure workers are trained in the safe use of ladders.

Older workers should be evaluated by a healthcare provider for fall risk. Those with moderate-to-high fall risk should not work on ladders, steps, and uneven surfaces.

References:

NIOSH Ladder Safety: www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/mobileapp.html
Preventing Falls in Older Persons: <https://www.aafp.org/afp/2017/0815/p240.html>

The California Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) program has been investigating work-related deaths since 1992. The goal of the FACE program is to prevent these deaths by informing workers and managers of worksite hazards and how to avoid them.

For a complete report of these (16CA006 & 19CA001) or other cases, and information on the California FACE Program, contact:

California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Third Floor, Richmond, CA 94804
OHB phone: (510) 620-5757
CA Relay Service: 711

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Visit our website at: www.cdph.ca.gov/face

* Not the victims' real name

PLEASE POST

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FACE stands for "Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation." The purpose of the FACE program is to find problems that may cause work-related deaths so that employers and employees can help prevent them.

FACE is a public health program run by the California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch, and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

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