

Safety Alert:

Worker suffers fatal injury from falling concrete forms

The Incident

Compared to many other types of construction job activities, setting concrete forms for the basement of a residence would not normally be considered very dangerous. This is especially true if a level basement has already been established and forms on racks have been lowered into place. All that remains to be done is to set the forms individually into place.

And yet, even in this most benign construction setting, things can go terribly wrong.

On an unseasonably warm mid-February day, a 19-year-old concrete worker was starting his sixth week on the job. He was doing the job of a new crew member; moving forms into place from the rack where they had been positioned. Unfortunately the forms were not restrained or positioned to prevent them from falling over as forms were removed. Apparently as the young worker removed one form, two others fell on him, knocking him to the ground. Tragically, he fell into a bucket of supplies and a whaler bracket protruding from the bucket impaled the worker through his ear, causing severe brain injuries.

After three days, the young man's family made the difficult decision to terminate life support and allow their son to die.

Lessons Learned

Safety often hinges on simple things. Securing forms or other heavy items on a job site may not seem to be a critical part of the job. Making sure supplies are positioned away from the work area, or at least properly arranged so they don't present a hazard, may seem like extra work that slows down the job. But when the cruel hand of fate intervenes, even seemingly harmless lapses in job site safety can lead to the death of a young man. That's when the importance of job safety practices, no matter how innocuous, hits very close to home for all of us. Youth, strength, and agility will not always overcome some events.

Our Safety Objective

When West Bend Mutual Insurance Company is entrusted to provide Workers Compensation coverage, the safety of our employers and their workers is our number-one concern. We want nothing less than an accident-free workplace for all of our customers. We periodically provide our agents with safety alerts like this not only to help you raise the awareness of employers, but to show all of us that without proper precautions, things can very easily go wrong.

For More Information

For more information on safety, visit our website to view current videos and information. To reach our website, go to www.thesilverlining.com, you can either view the intro or "skip intro". At this point, you should click on the services tab and then click on the drop down "Loss Prevention Library." In order for our website to work properly, you must allow pop-ups.

Our loss prevention library link also has scores of videos, brochures, articles, and links to other public domain sites that can provide valuable advice on a variety of topics.

*Safety Alert situations do come from actual claims for West Bend Mutual Insurance Company, but details that could identify the parties involved are either omitted or slightly changed to respect the privacy of all involved.