Counterweight Gives Way



Two employees were painting the outside of a three-story building. They were standing on a two-point suspension scaffold. The outriggers for the scaffold were inadequately counterweighted with three five-gallon (18.93-liter) buckets of sand. They were not secured to a structurally-sound part of the building. Neither worker was wearing approved fall arrest equipment. One of the two outriggers failed. One painter was able to climb onto the roof but the other fell about 35 feet and was killed.

Scaffolds and their components should be able to hold at least four times the maximum intended load. Outriggers must be connected to a structurally sound part of the building as a backup anchorage. Workers at heights must use approved fall arrest equipment with an independent lifeline also attached to a structurally sound part of the building.