Dreams Cut Short by Toppling Boards



A 26-year-old Yale School of Drama student who was working on his master’s degree in technical design and production had his dreams and his life cut short while unloading materials from a truck in advance of a theater production.

Pierre-Andre Salim of Jakarta, Indonesia, was fatally crushed by 32 sheets of particleboard. Preliminary investigation revealed that the particleboard should have been placed on the floor of the truck instead of being loaded upright and strapped to one side of it.

When the straps were loosened, the load toppled. OSHA investigators in Bridgeport, CT, are also trying to determine whether students unloading heavy materials from the truck had received instruction and safety training. No citations can be brought against the university because the victim was not an employee. However, recommendations can be made in hopes of avoiding similar tragedies in the future.

The victim had been wearing a hardhat, but it was knocked off when he was struck by the wood, which weighed at least 1,000 pounds (454 kilograms).

This story is important for any company that allows students to gain work experience. While they are not employees, supervisors are responsible for ensuring that they are trained before being assigned tasks. They also must be carefully observed to ensure they are working safely.