Fall From Girder Kills Ironworker

An ironworker foreman died in a fall from a roof under construction after he removed a safety barricade.

The victim was supervising a crew building the roof of a cold storage warehouse. The final structural beam, a bar joist, was being moved into place. It was not quite straight and the foreman wanted to hammer it. To reach the area where he needed to work, he removed part of the wire rope safety barricade then stood on the completed roof decking. To get to the beam, he put one foot out over an open, undecked area and rested it on a girder. As he prepared to strike with the hammer, his foot slipped off the girder. His hands caught the steel beam for a moment, but he could not hold on. He fell about 40 feet (12 meters) to the floor below.

Investigators looking into this fatality recommended that employers should require everyone working at heights to wear fall protection gear. They should make sure openings are properly covered and protected. And, if possible, employers should provide another means of access to the work, such as an aerial lift. When you work aloft, are you protected by fall arrest equipment, barricades and floor opening covers? Is alternative safe access available when you need it?