Landscaper Drowns

A 23-year-old worker who could not swim drowned in a landscape pond in Oregon.

The Hispanic man was working for a landscape development company. He and a co-worker were laying rocks around a pond in a ravine. The victim slipped on the bank at the water's edge, perhaps while trying to avoid rocks falling from a tipped wheelbarrow. The co-worker grabbed his hand but was pulled into deep water. No grab lines, life preserver rings, fall prevention equipment or poles were nearby. The co-worker managed to get out and go for help. Rescuers at first couldn't find, then later couldn't revive, the victim. He apparently drowned when pulled underwater by the weight of his knee-high boots filled with water.

Oregon's Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation team investigated and made recommendations:

- *When working near water, have grab lines, life preservers or rings and poles handy.*
- *Wear fall protection.*
- *Wear approved personal flotation device if a non-swimmer.*
- *Get emergency response training.*

Source: Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) Program, Case Report 03OR008