Roofing (Heat) Hazards Fatality Report



Roofing company cited after 47-year-old laborer dies after suffering heat stroke on third day on the job

Employee hospitalized with a body core temperature of 107 degrees

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. – Federal investigators have cited a Jefferson City roofing contractor after a 47-year-old laborer collapsed on Aug. 17, 2016, and later died after being hospitalized with a core body temperature above 107 degrees.

U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration investigators determined the employee collapsed on his third day on the job while installing roofing materials at Helias High School. The heat index was about 90 degrees when he collapsed. He died of his injuries on Aug. 18, 2016.

On Nov. 2, 2016, OSHA cited his employer, Weathercraft Incorporated, for one serious violation of OSHA's general duty clause following its investigation.

"This tragedy occurred on this worker's third day on the job. His needless death underscores how critical it is for employers to ensure that workers are acclimated to heat conditions. A review of heat-related deaths across industries finds most workers were new to the job and not physically used to the constant heat and sun exposure," said Karena Lorek, OSHA's acting area director in Kansas City. "Workers should have frequent access to water, rest and shade to prevent heat illness and injuries during the hot summer months and during hot indoor conditions and be trained to recognize and respond to the signs of heat-related illness."

In addition to acclimating workers to heat conditions OSHA also recommends employers:

- Train supervisors and other employees in the proper response to employees reporting heat-induced illness symptoms, which includes stopping work, moving to a cool place, and providing help, evaluation and medical assistance.
- Require trained supervisors to go into the field and conduct in-person evaluations of employees complaining of heat-induced symptoms.
- Establish work rules and practices that encourage employees to seek assistance and evaluation when experiencing heat stress symptoms.

Commonly, people believe mistakenly that if they are sweating, they are not in danger of heat stroke. In fact, sweating is no indication that heat stroke is possible. One frequent symptom of heat stroke is mental changes, such as confusion or irritability. Heat stroke is a medical emergency. If there is any suggestion of heat stroke, call 911 and institute the other safety measures as quickly as possible.