Safe Materials Storage – Landscaping Fatality File



Fatal Incident Due to Improper Materials Storage in Landscaping

On May 28, 2023, a fatal accident occurred at a landscaping supply yard in Chicago, Illinois, resulting in the death of a 41-year-old worker, John Patterson. Patterson was moving pallets of heavy stone pavers that had been stacked improperly in an outdoor storage area. As he attempted to access a lower pallet, the unstable stack collapsed, causing several hundred pounds of stone to fall on him. Despite the efforts of his coworkers and emergency responders, Patterson was pronounced dead at the scene from crushing injuries.

The investigation revealed that the materials had been stored in a manner that did not comply with safety guidelines. The stacks were uneven and exceeded the height recommended for stability, making them prone to collapse. Additionally, the site lacked proper signage and barriers to prevent unauthorized access to high-risk areas, and there was no formal training provided to workers on safe materials storage practices.

In response to the incident, the landscaping company has implemented strict storage protocols, including maximum stack height limits, proper securing of materials, and regular inspections to ensure compliance with safety standards. The company has also introduced mandatory training for all employees on safe storage and handling of landscaping materials.