Working on Fragile Roofs Fatality File



Roofer Falls 20 Feet through Rotten Roof

A 39-year-old roofer was severely injured when he fell 20 feet through a rotten roof. He had 22 years of experience in the roofing industry and had been with his employer, a roofing contractor, for a year.

The injured roofer was a member of a four-person crew that had been tearing-off and replacing the flat (low pitch) roof of a manufacturing storage facility for a month. On the day of the incident, they were working to remove three layers of roofing materials to check for spots of rotten roof.

Warning lines were set up near the roof's edges and a safety monitor was used. Workers were not required to use personal fall protection while inside the warning lines. Outside of the warning lines, they were required to use a personal fall arrest system consisting of a full body harness with ropes tied off to anchor points. Most of the visible rotten roof was in the area outside of the warning lines.

The roofer was inside the warning lines near the roof ridge using a shovel to scrape off shingles and insulation. As he stepped backward, a patch of rotten roof gave way and he fell through, landing 20 feet below on wood flooring. He was severely injured and suffered numerous fractures and internal injuries.

Investigators found that a worker had previously placed an orange cone to mark a rotten spot near where the roofer broke through the roof. The spot he fell through was three feet away from the cone and under three layers of roofing material so he was not able to recognize it was rotten. Workers had also been walking across the roof in the area for several weeks. At the time of the incident, the safety monitor was on the other side of the roof ridge throwing debris into a truck below. After the incident, the employer required workers to use a personal fall arrest system at all times.

Source: *Workersadvisor.com*