From 1994-2004, there were 61 construction falls in Kentucky; 44 of them were commercial falls and 17 workers died from residential roofing falls (2 of whom died in 2004).

The first case in 2004 involved a subcontract worker who fell from a shooting boom lift while lifting shingles for installation on a residential roof. The victim installed shingles on the other side of the roof in the morning and had, reportedly, worn fall protection. After lunch, the decedent and his supervisor, the subcontractor, were cleaning up the grounds surrounding the house. After they completed the task, the victim loaded shingles onto the lift to be transported to the roof where other employees would install them. The victim then climbed into the lift bucket without tying off to the bucket with fall protection or a positioning device. The supervisor raised the lift to approximately 25 feet into the air. The exact circumstances of the fall are unclear but the victim fell from the bucket while transferring 3 bundles of shingles to the roof. The victim fell headfirst onto a brick surface and tried to break his fall with his arms. He died of a severe closed head injury 6 days later.

In the second residential roofing incident of 2004, a subcontractor working for a home renovation business died when he fell off a roof while scraping windows. While preparing windows to be repainted, the subcontractor stepped back off the edge of the roof and fell from the second story level, approximately 18 to 20 feet, to a bricked surface below on his back. Emergency medical services were called and when they arrived, the subcontractor was conscious but complained of breathing difficulties. On the way to the hospital, he became unconscious and died of multiple injuries.

To prevent falls while working on roofs:

- Always use appropriate guardrail, scaffold, or fall protection systems.
- Both employers and subcontractors should provide comprehensive site-specific fall protection training for their employees.
- Conduct a thorough assessment in and around the work area to identify existing and potential fall hazards prior to the start of work.

Always Use a Fall Protection System When Working on a Roof.
ALWAYS USE A GUARDRAIL SYSTEM, SCAFFOLD SYSTEM OR PERSONAL FALL ARREST SYSTEM WHEN WORKING 6 FEET OR MORE ABOVE LOWER LEVELS IN RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION.

On February 16, 2005, Kentucky OSH issued Instruction 01-2005 that addresses residential construction fall protection referenced by 29 CFR 1926.501(b)(13) as incorporated by 803 KAR 2:412 for residential construction defined as “the construction of a stand alone single family dwelling or duplex”. In this instruction, KY OSH will no longer follow STD 3.1 and employers are required to provide fall protection measures. If employee utilization of fall protection measures is unfeasible or creates a greater hazard as DEMONSTRATED by an employer, the employer must implement a site specific fall protection plan.

For residential construction, employers must provide protection from falls 6 feet or above to lower levels using guardrail systems, a safety net system, or fall protection system (Kentucky OSH for the construction Industry Subpart M 29 CFR 1926.501(b)(13)) or they may implement the measures in Appendix A of the new instruction that says a combination of guardrail, scaffold, or personal fall protection systems must be used. The fall protection systems must adhere to the criteria in 29 CFR 1926.502.

If a scaffolding system is utilized, it must conform to standards 29 CFR 1926.451 and 1926.452.

CONTRACT EMPLOYERS SHOULD ENSURE THAT SUBCONTRACTORS PROVIDE THE SAME LEVEL OF COMPREHENSIVE FALL PREVENTION SAFETY PROGRAMS AS THEIR OWN.

Fall prevention training specific to the type of work to be performed by the employee should be available through the employer. Subcontractors should be responsible for providing the same level of fall prevention training as the prime contractor. Appropriate restraint systems for the type of roof, anchorage strategies, and arrest systems should be discussed and demonstrated by a competent person.

CONDUCT A THOROUGH ASSESSMENT IN AND AROUND THE WORK AREA TO IDENTIFY EXISTING AND POTENTIAL FALL HAZARDS PRIOR TO THE START OF WORK.

Before commencing work, the work site should be assessed by a competent person to determine the appropriate type of fall protection necessary for the specific type of roof to be constructed or renovated. If an employer demonstrates that conventional fall protection is infeasible or creates a greater hazard, then a site specific fall protection plan needs to drafted that meets the requirement of 29 CFR 1926.502 (K).

References:

For more information, contact:
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