

**Preliminary Findings into the
October 20, 2009 Fall from Height at
Whitehorse Copper Subdivision Worksite**

PURPOSE:

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has seen a recent increase in the number of serious injuries resulting from falls from heights. These initial findings are being released to provide information into the direct causes of one of these falls. It is hoped that providing this information will encourage others to review these causes and examine their own workplaces to ensure similar conditions either do not exist or, if they do, are immediately corrected.

INTRODUCTION:

On October 20, 2009 at Whitehorse Copper Subdivision, Yukon, a 23 year old construction worker fell from a roof on which he was working. The young worker fell 5.18 metres (17 feet), sustaining a fractured left wrist. The roof was under construction at the time and the worker was in the process of installing Oriented Strand Board (OSB) to the roof.

The incident happened around 10am. The roof on which the worker was working had unguarded edges and the worker had failed to don either a travel restraint or a fall arrest system (which was available on site). The worker slipped on a sheet of OSB and slid off the roof. He caught hold of the fascia and held on for several seconds before falling to the ground.

DIRECT CAUSES:

Preliminary findings indicate that the direct causes of this fall are a result of a worker slipping on a sheet of OSB while constructing a roof. The roof had unguarded edges and the worker was not using appropriate fall protective equipment, allowing the worker to fall off the roof and plummet 5.18 metres (17 feet) to the ground.

PREVENTION:

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board remind all workplace parties that, *prior to commencing any work*, they are required to assess all the hazards that workers must deal with, and then design and implement appropriate measures to reduce the risk of injury.

Yukon Occupational Health and Safety Regulation states:

- 10.11** A worker shall be protected by the use of a fall restraint system, a fall arrest system, a control zone, or another system of fall protection acceptable to the director when a worker is engaged in any work on a roof that
- (a) is 3 m (10 ft.) or more above the ground or other safe working level,
 - (b) has a slope of 2 vertical to 3 horizontal or steeper, or
 - (c) has an unguarded edge.

All workers working at heights must be protected by appropriate fall prevention measures, provided with appropriate fall prevention equipment and required to use the fall prevention measures at all times. These measures may include guardrails around the edges from which a worker might fall, travel restraint or fall arrest systems, or any combination thereof.

Workers must follow the appropriate fall prevention measures and must use the fall protection equipment provided by their employer.

Employers are required to develop and implement fall prevention and rescue plans whenever they have workers working at heights.

Employers are also required to provide all workers that work from heights with training in fall prevention techniques, fall prevention systems, use, care and maintenance of Personal Protective Equipment, and rescue techniques.