

**Preliminary Findings into a
January 15, 2010 Workplace Fall
At Whitehorse Worksite**

PURPOSE:

These initial findings are being released to provide information into the direct causes of a fall which resulted in a worker sustaining a fractured pelvis. 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 Friday January 15, 2010 a worker was delivering fuel to a local contractors work site. The worker climbed up a metal ladder to access a walkway that lead to the fuel tank opening. The worker then walked along the walkway to the fuel tank opening carrying the fuel nozzle in his hand. While the worker was trying to place the nozzle into the fuel tank he lost his balance and fell approximately 2 meters onto the frozen ground, fracturing his pelvis.

The walkway was constructed of metal; it was approximately 2 meters long and 50 cm wide. The walkway was installed below the mid point of the tank approximately 2 meters off the ground. The walkway was not fitted with guardrails to prevent a fall or grab rails to enable the worker to hold on while delivering fuel.

DIRECT CAUSES:

Preliminary findings indicate that the direct cause of this incident was the result of a worker manipulating a heavy, unbalanced load while on a walkway that did not provide any fall protective mechanisms. The worker lost his balance while attempting to insert the fuel nozzle into the tank opening resulting in a fall.

PREVENTION:

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board reminds all workplace parties of their legal requirement to assess the hazards associated with workplace activities. Falls from any height can result in serious injury and must be guarded against.

Fuel delivery requires workers to pull a heavy hose into a variety of locations that present multiple hazards on a daily basis. Access to fuel tanks must be maintained free of slipping and tripping hazards.

Metal ladders and walkways at any height become slippery when cold or when fuel oil is spilled. Given the hazard of an unbalanced load created by the fuel hose and nozzle and slippery conditions, special precautions must be taken on

all fuel tanks where a worker is required to access the fuel opening at any height above ground.