

TOOLBOX TALK #36

FRAMER FALLS 8 FEET FROM RIM JOIST



A 44-year-old experienced framer had worked for his employer, a residential contractor, for 5 years. He and a coworker were removing previously installed second-level floor joists to relocate an inside kitchen wall that was framed in the wrong place. After finishing his task, the worker went to an outside wall where his coworker was working and sat down on a rim joist to wait.

The joist was 8 feet above the floor decking and had a window opening just below it. The worker was straddling the joist to support himself above the opening. He then leaned to the inside of the wall and lost his balance. He fell, head first, to the floor decking below. His coworker saw him fall, called 911, and began CPR.

When first responders arrived, the worker was breathing but unresponsive. He was air-lifted to a hospital and placed on life-support. He died 5 days later.

Investigators found that the fall hazard to the outside of the wall was 9'-9¾". Fall protection was not used. The framer attended weekly safety meetings where fall protection was a recurring main topic. The employer had a written incident prevention program with a fall protection plan, and the project manager for the general contractor was on site when the incident occurred.

To help prevent similar occurrences, employers should:

- Provide scaffolding, aerial lifts, edge protection platforms, guardrails, safety nets or personal fall protection systems for workers who must walk on top plates, joists, rafter, trusses, beams or similar structural members. Train workers to use these methods and equipment properly, and periodically evaluate their fall protection knowledge and skills.
- Arrive onsite before work begins or appoint a supervisor to jointly conduct a site hazard assessment with workers to identify fall hazards and develop fall protection solutions.
- During the pre-job safety meeting, review the site hazard assessment and discuss workers' responsibilities to use fall protection and follow fall prevention safe work practices.