

Company Cited For Fall Hazards At Philadelphia Worksite

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recently cited a Pennsylvania company for failing to provide its workers with proper fall protection. Bricklayers were tasked with conducting their work on scaffolding as high as 30 feet in the air without adequate safety measures in place.

Based on a tip from the Philadelphia Department of License and Inspections (L&I), OSHA sent investigators to the worksite on two separate occasions. During each of these visits, the inspectors observed a range of scaffolding-related safety hazards, including the lack of safety equipment provided to the workers.

The company was cited twice in the past two years for similar violations. If such violations exist within the past five years, as was the case here, OSHA treats the new instances as repeat violations and imposes a larger penalty. In this case, the repeat violations combined with five serious violations (issued when an employer knows or should know about the presence of a condition that has a substantial probability of causing serious physical injury or death) resulted in a total of more than \$100,000 in proposed penalties.

As hefty as that amount may seem, compare it to the costs that would follow had one of the unprotected workers fallen from such significant heights. As noted by OSHA, falls from so far above the ground almost always result in death or permanent disability. This would have led to extensive medical and long-term costs for the injured worker, as well as substantial liability and likely increased insurance rates for the employer. In the end, the collective costs of a fall would

have far eclipsed the six-figure penalty proposed by OSHA.