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Ladder: A school custodian used an extension ladder to access the roof to retrieve playground balls. The spring-loaded locks were not set properly. Although the custodian was able to climb the ladder successfully, the ladder collapsed when he put his weight on it to return to the ground.

Unprotected Skylight: A roofer died when he fell through a skylight to a concrete floor below. He had completed water leak repairs on the flat roof of a commercial warehouse and was backing up while winding a torch hose when he stepped into the skylight.

Trip and Fall: An elderly merchant tripped over a box on the floor of his shop and fractured his hip. He died four days later from surgery complications.

How to prevent similar accidents:

Ladder Safety:

- Make sure the ladder is in good condition and set correctly. Set base at a 4:1 ratio from the wall and support the top by extending both rails 3-4 ft. above the dismount level.
- Protect the base from traffic. If a ladder must be placed in front of a door, make sure the door is locked or guarded.
- Apply the three-point rule: Keep at least both feet and one hand or both hands and one foot on the ladder at all times.

Elevated Work Area Protection:

- Cover and guard floor openings securely.
- Include fall protection as part of your workplace safety training program.

General Housekeeping:

- Remove trip hazards and organize work flow to keep passageways clear.

- Clean all spills immediately, and mark wet areas with warning signs.

For more information see these publications on the Oregon OSHA website: orosha.org.
"Oregon OSHA's Fall Protection for the Construction Industry"
"Portable ladders: How to use them so they won't let you down"

Safety Quiz

What percent of all Oregon fatal fall-related incidents in 2005 involved ladders?

- A. 10 percent
- B. 25 percent
- C. 30 percent
- D. 50 percent
- E. 75 percent

Oregon Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation (FACE) statistics.

(The correct answer is D. 50 percent)