

N E W S R E L E A S E

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Cal/OSHA Cites Contractor Following Accident that Crushed Worker

American Canyon—Cal/OSHA has cited a Bay Area contractor for serious safety violations after a worker was fatally crushed at a San Rafael construction site on September 18, 2018. Investigators determined that West Coast Land and Development, Inc. did not follow regulations when it stacked plywood vertically without securing it.

The accident occurred when two employees of the Concord company were framing and installing a shear wall on the third floor of a house under construction. One worker went to get a sheet of plywood from a stack of 26 panels stacked vertically and leaning against a wall. A foreman found the worker's body 20 minutes later with the stack of plywood on top of him.

“Unsecured plywood, drywall and similar material stacked vertically create life-threatening hazards to employees,” said Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum. “As this tragic incident demonstrates, employers should store the materials flat or ensure the materials are secured when stored vertically to prevent serious and even fatal injuries.”

Cal/OSHA cited West Coast Land and Development \$26,540 for eight violations. In addition to the serious accident-related violation for stacking plywood sheets vertically without securing the sheets against tipping or falling, serious citations were issued for the employer's failure to:

- Guard an opening on the house's second floor to prevent employees falling through it
- Protect workers from the hazard of impalement on exposed reinforcing steel projections
- Protect workers from falling when working on elevated surfaces at heights more than 15 feet

A regulatory violation was cited for failing to obtain the required construction-related project permit, and general violations were cited for failing to evaluate worksite hazards and protect workers from loose rock or soil at an excavation site, and failure to provide handrails and stair rails along unprotected sides and edges of stairways.

A serious violation is cited when there is a realistic possibility that death or serious harm could result from the actual hazardous condition. Violations are classified as accident-related when the injury, illness or fatality is caused by the violation.

Cal/OSHA offers [extensive information and resources](#) on working safely in the construction industry, including hazard identification, hazard correction, and establishing and implementing an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

All employers in California are required to have an effective written injury and illness prevention program, a safety program to identify, assess and control hazards in the workplace. [Cal/OSHA has online tools](#) and [publications](#) to guide employers on how to establish an effective safety program. Cal/OSHA's resources on fall protection include [safety and health factsheets](#), [residential fall protection training](#) and a [construction safety pocket guide](#).

Cal/OSHA helps protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job in almost every workplace in California. [Cal/OSHA's Consultation Services Branch](#) provides free and voluntary assistance to employers to improve their health and safety programs. Employers should call (800) 963-9424 for assistance from Cal/OSHA Consultation Services.

Employees with work-related questions or complaints may contact DIR's Call Center in English or Spanish at 844-LABOR-DIR (844-522-6734). The California Workers' Information line at 866-924-9757 provides recorded information in English and Spanish on a variety of work-related topics. Complaints can also be filed confidentially with [Cal/OSHA district offices](#).

Members of the press may contact Peter Melton or Lucas Brown at (510) 286-1161, and are encouraged to [subscribe to get email alerts](#) on DIR's press releases or other departmental updates.

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