
Worker fatally injured in fall from an aerial platform

July 8, 2020

The contents of this report

This document reports the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) investigation of a fatal incident that occurred in July 2020. It begins with a short summary of what happened. The rest of the report covers this same information in greater detail.

Incident summary

An electrician was in the process of disconnecting power to a dust collector located outside, adjacent to the wall of a building. The electrician was on an aerial platform, mounted on a forklift, and was being raised to position for the task by a forklift operator. The aerial platform tipped and the electrician fell onto the concrete surface below, striking their head.

Background information

Employer 1

Cano Coatings Inc. was a small employer with eight employees and a manufacturer of specialty coating/paint products for the building industry. The company was in the process of moving their existing facility at 36 Industry Way, Calgary to a new location at 5935 – 6 Street, Calgary. The Electrician was in the process of disconnecting the electrical connections to a dust collector located outside the current shop. The Electrician was assigned to Cano Coatings Inc. by the sister company, Pinkwood Ltd. Cano Coatings Inc. paid Pinkwood Ltd. for the Electrician's services.

Employer 2

Pinkwood Ltd. was a Calgary based medium sized employer (60 – 70 employees) and manufacturer of specialty wood I-joists for use in residential housing and in commercial building. Pinkwood Ltd. and Cano Coatings Inc. were sister companies. Pinkwood Ltd.'s Operations Manager was the General Manager of Cano Coatings Inc. Pinkwood Ltd. hired the Electrician on July 1, 2020, mainly to assist Cano Coatings Inc. to move to the new location. Pinkwood Ltd. paid the Electrician for the work performed at Cano Coatings Inc.

Electrician

The Electrician (deceased) was a Journeyman Electrician and was hired by Pinkwood Ltd. on July 1, 2020. The Electrician had 10 years of experience as an electrician and was given an orientation by Pinkwood Ltd. The day of the incident was their first day at the new Cano Coatings Inc. location. On July 7, 2020, the Electrician received instructions to work on Cano Coatings Inc. relocation work from the Pinkwood Ltd. Operations Manager.

Forklift Operator

The Forklift Operator had been with Cano Coatings Inc. for 10 years. They had 15 years of experience as a Forklift Operator and had been re-certified as a Forklift Operator by Cano Coatings Inc. in March 2020. The Forklift Operator also did general labour and supervision in the shop. The Forklift Operator was instructed to help the Electrician by the General Manager.

General Manager

The General Manager had been with Cano Coatings Inc. for 10 years, had 20 years of experience in the manufacturing sector and was certified to train forklift operators. The General Manager was also the Operations Manager at Pinkwood Ltd. The General Manager hired and oriented the Electrician and trained and certified the Forklift Operator. The General Manager was in the office at the location when the incident occurred and was informed by the Forklift Operator.

Work site, equipment and materials

Work site

The work site was the back yard of the old Cano Coating Inc. building at 36 Industry Way. The dust collector was located adjacent to the rear wall of the building (Figure 1). The workers were in the process of disconnecting the electrical power on the dust collector. The forklift was on concrete surface behind the dust collector during the process.



Figure 1. Work site at the back of the building

A. Dust collector, which the workers were dismantling

B. Concrete surface where the worker struck their head

Forklift

The forklift used to lift the Electrician up was a Manitou Rough Terrain Forklift Model M 50-4 (Figure 2). Cano Coatings Inc. had purchased the unit in 2013 and had been regularly maintained by Leavitt Machinery Ltd. It was suitable for outdoor use.



Figure 2. Forklift used to lift the aerial platform

Aerial platform

The platform used to lift the Electrician was an Uline Forklift Aerial Platform 48X40 inch model H-2772 equipped with guard rails and slots under the platform (Figure 3). It was designed to use with a forklift with matching forks. It was purchased in September 2018. The forks on the Manitou were too wide to match the slots under the platform (Figure 4). The platform was equipped with a retainer chain (Figure 5).



Figure 3. Forklift aerial platform used to lift the worker



*Figure 4. The aerial platform on the forks of the forklift
A. The forks were together, between the slots under the aerial platform*



Figure 5. The broken retainer chain attached to the aerial platform

Sequence of events

On July 1, 2020, Pinkwood Ltd. hired the Electrician. On July 7, 2020, the Pinkwood Ltd. Operations Manager asked the Electrician to report to work at the Cano Coatings Inc. facility, to disconnect power to the dust collector with the help of the Forklift Operator. On July 8, 2020, the Electrician arrived at the Cano Coatings Inc. facility in the morning, and met with the General Manager and the Forklift Operator.

The Forklift Operator brought the forklift with the forklift aerial platform to the east side of the shop where the Electrician was. Together they discussed the work and placed the aerial platform on the forks of the forklift and used the retainer chain to hold the platform to the forklift. The forks of the forklift did not fit into the fork pockets under the aerial platform. The forks were placed together between the fork pockets. At around 9:30 a.m., the Forklift Operator drove the forklift to the location of the dust collector and met the Electrician.

The Electrician entered the aerial platform, and the Forklift Operator raised the aerial platform on the forks to position the Electrician to reach the electrical box for the dust collector. At around 9:38 a.m., the Electrician moved to the left side of the aerial platform to signal the Forklift Operator where the aerial platform should be. The aerial platform tipped, the retainer chain broke, and the Electrician was thrown out of the aerial platform to the concrete surface below, sustaining a head injury.

The Forklift Operator called for help from the General Manager and other workers, who arrived on the scene, and called 911. Emergency Medical Services arrived on the scene, provided assistance to the injured Electrician and transported the injured Electrician to the hospital. The Electrician was declared deceased on July 11, 2020.

Completion

A review for enforcement action was completed on March 9, 2021, and it was determined that the file would be referred to Alberta Justice for review. The entire file was sent to Alberta Justice on April 6, 2021. After a thorough review, Alberta Justice advised OHS on January 13, 2022, charges were not recommended.

This investigation was completed on May 9, 2022.

Signatures

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

Lead Investigator

May 9, 2022

Date

ORIGINAL REPORT SIGNED

Manager

May 9, 2022

Date