

One lived, one died

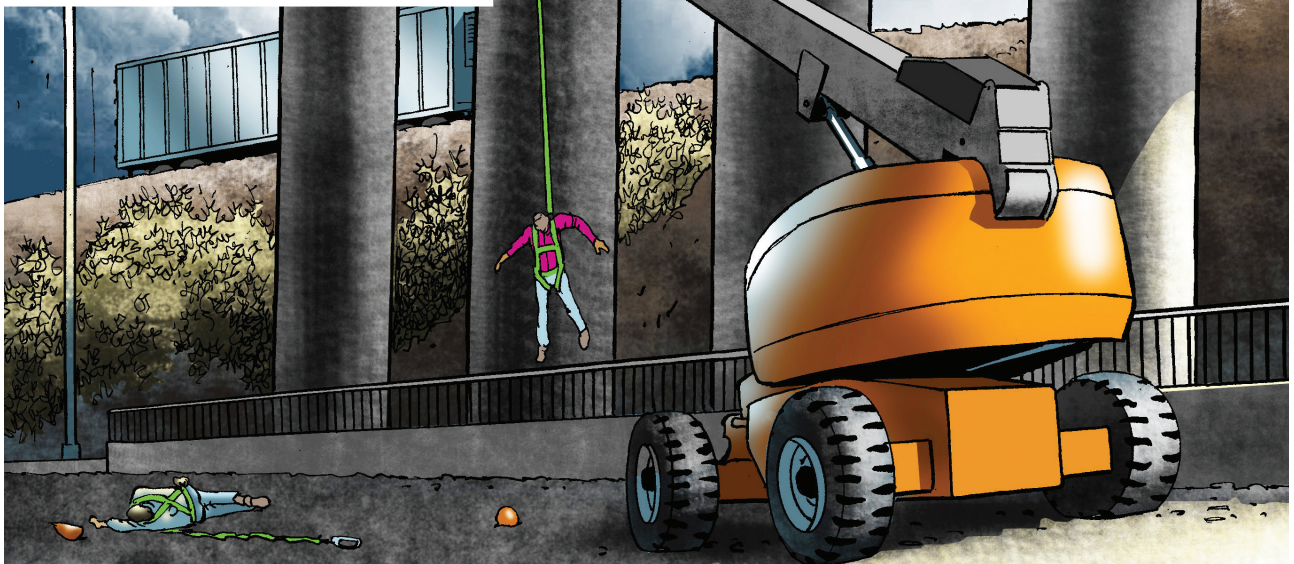


Illustration by Don Lomax

The two men looked as though they were suited up, but they weren't.

As they climbed into the platform, both a foreman and a laborer wore regulation full body harnesses and lanyards. But the supervisor neglected to clip his lanyard to the manufacturer-provided and -approved attachment point. The laborer tied off to the railing around the handrail at the perimeter of the basket, but not to an approved attachment point.

Their job was to install replacement retaining rods that hold seismic restraining pads on the underside of a freeway bridge. They were using a self-propelled telescopic boom lift and work platform. They positioned the boom lift in a dirt median between two of the freeway ramps but did not put out cones or any warning or traffic-control devices. Traffic controls had been used on this part of the project previously, but ramp closure was not permitted on workdays, as stipulated by the city DOT.

After loading their tools, they got into the basket and raised it 30 feet above an elevated exit ramp. As the foreman was positioning the platform, a box truck came down the ramp and struck the aerial lift, spinning it 180 degrees and jarring the basket so hard the supervisor was thrown 50 feet horizontally and down to the next level of pavement 48 feet below. He died of his injuries.

The laborer fell 10 feet and was stopped from falling farther by his lanyard; he dangled above the road until he could be rescued. He was treated at a hospital for abdominal injuries and survived.

How this accident could have been prevented:

- When working in the basket of an aerial lift, always wear an approved body harness or fall protection device and attach the lanyard to the manufacturer's recommended attachment point.

- When working around traffic areas always put out the required temporary traffic control devices. Use a flag person to warn oncoming cars of the construction work ahead.
- Employers should provide adequate on-site supervision to ensure employees follow recommended safety practices.
- Employers should do a job-hazard analysis before work and communicate the results of that analysis to the crews. For more on this accident see: <http://bit.ly/AWP-accident>

For additional resources see: *Highway Work Zones and Signs, Signals and Barricades, OSHA*

<http://bit.ly/work-zone> and *Falls from Elevating Work Platforms, Washington State Department of L&I* <http://bit.ly/falls-elevating>



Date of safety talk: _____ Leader: _____
 Attending: _____