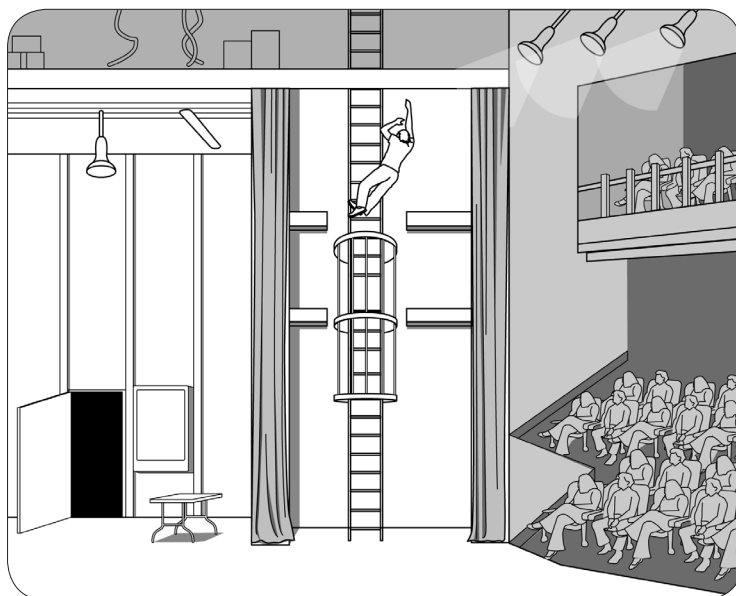


Young theatre worker seriously injured in ladder fall

A young worker was providing technical support for a community theatre performance. Toward the end of intermission, the worker began climbing a fixed, 10 m (32 ft.) wooden ladder to operate a moving spotlight located on a mezzanine above the audience seating area. The worker lost hold of the ladder and fell to the stage floor about 8 m (25 ft.) below. On the way down, the worker struck a steel-cage system — three metal half-hoops around the ladder's lower perimeter — and landed on the floor, suffering serious injuries.

This worker had no fall protection or training in fall protection: harnesses and lanyards were stored away, viable anchor points were missing or unavailable, and the steel cage provided insufficient guarding. The job-built ladder failed to meet minimum safety standards. These hazards reflected a work environment with minimal commitment to worker health and safety: 70 pages of written health and safety procedures were available but not followed, and work took place with no safety planning, no new-and-young-worker training and supervision, and no comprehensive safety inspections.



Safe work practices

- Develop a workplace safety culture so that everyone understands the risks they're exposed to, how to reduce or eliminate those risks, and when to refuse unsafe work.
- Provide a written health and safety program and ensure workers are trained and supervised to follow it.
- Inspect and maintain all equipment and safety systems according to regulatory requirements and the manufacturer's instructions.
- Ensure workers exposed to a fall hazard greater than 3 m (10 ft.) use personal fall protection or a fixed, engineered fall restraint system.

For assistance and information on workplace health and safety, call toll-free within B.C. 1.888.621.SAFE (7233) or visit our website at worksafebc.com. To request a copy of the complete investigation report, contact the WorkSafeBC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy office toll-free at 1.866.266.9405.