

SAFETY MEMO

June 19th, 2023 – Ladder Slip

Incident Description

An employee was conducting a site visit that required checking piping on the roof. A job hazard analysis form was completed, and the employee identified all the relevant hazards and the required personal protective equipment.

It was rainy and windy on the day of the site visit and when descending the ladder, the employee slipped on the second last ladder rung from the bottom and stumbled onto the roof. The employee was wearing boot covers as required by the site policy. This prevented them from placing their foot firmly on the ladder rung.



Figure 1: Example of non-slip boot covers, courtesy of Safety Express

External Conditions

- Rain and wind.
- Slick, wet ladder and handrails.
- Ladder type: fixed metal.
- Ladder rung type round vs flat topped.
- Ladder placement: fastened to the structure.
- Client required boot covers.
- Slippery ladder side rails.

Human Factors reported by the employee

- Possibly not maintaining three-point contact with the ladder.
- Not watching or paying attention where they were stepping.
- Employee may have been rushing to complete the task and get out of the rain.

Possible Consequences

The ladder and roof were wet, and the wind was strong; the employee could have slipped from an even greater height resulting in serious injury or death.

The worker's foot could have slipped forward and be caught on the inside of the ladder, potentially between a solid structure such as wall or tank.



Figure 2: Images courtesy of iStock

Lessons Learned

- Ensure proper footwear is worn. Wear safety boots with heels.
- Avoid climbing ladders while wearing boot covers.
- Avoid climbing ladders with wet, muddy, or otherwise dirty soles.
- Develop a procedure for ladder usage in inclement weather.
- This is a situation where the worker can exercise their right to refuse unsafe work due to the wet environment and / or the use of boot covers when climbing a ladder.
- Avoid performing work from ladders during inclement weather.
- Evaluate the site for hazards that are / may be present from weather conditions such as rain, heat, or wind.