

39 Struck by—Inspection #1356455 Nashville Machine Elevator Co

A **26 year old male** was fatally injured when he was **struck by** an elevator counterweight.

Elevators in a hospital setting were required to be brought up to current code, which required guarding of the counterweights with sheet metal barriers. On the day of the incident, the victim was working on top of car #5 with another employee installing angle iron to attach a metal plate between elevator cars to guard the counterweights.

The victim was operating a smoke vacuum to remove welding fumes. They had started working earlier that morning at the 14th floor and had worked their way down to the 10th floor. The top of these elevator cars was equipped with adequate guardrail systems to prevent employees from falling. However, the employees were working within 16-19 inches of the moving elevator counterweight, with nothing in place to prevent them from coming in contact with the moving counterweights.

The employees were able to manually control the movement of the elevator with a pendant control that overrode all other elevator controls/functions. While performing this task the surrounding elevator(s) were left in operation and were frequently utilized by the hospital staff, patients, etc. Per the hospital, only one elevator at a time could be shut down in each bank of four elevators. The #4 elevator was left in automatic operation, as the hospital needed it for code blue situations, as it was the only elevator that went to the 12th floor for the helicopter operator's office.

Approximately 30 minutes after starting work at the 10th floor, one employee began to weld and then he heard a sound and then felt something brush up against his leg. He then realized it was his co-worker who had been fatally wounded by an elevator counterweight. As there were no means in place to prevent employees from leaning out over the guardrails of the car, the victim, for an unknown reason, was able to lean over and get his head in the travel path of the counterweight. As the counterweight descended, making little to no noise, the victim was unaware of it and was struck in the head resulting in fatal injuries.

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Citation(s) as Originally Issued

A complete inspection was conducted at the accident scene. Some of the items cited may not directly relate to the fatality.

Citation 1 Item 1 Type of Violation: Serious \$5,400

TCA 50-3-105(1): The employer did not furnish to each of its employees conditions of employment and a place of employment free from recognized hazards that were causing or were likely to cause death or serious injury or harm to its employees:

In that the employer did not ensure that employees were protected from struck by or crushing hazards created by the up and down movement of elevator counterweights. On 10/24/18 an employee was fatally wounded when struck in the head by an elevator counterweight as it was lowering.

This photo depicts how close the moving counterweight (red arrow) was to the work area. The yellow arrows depict where the metal plates were being welded to the structure.



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This photo depicts how close the moving counterweight (red arrow) was to the work area (yellow arrow).

