

Fall - Inspection #1856646

A 52-year-old male was working as an instructor for a high angle rescue course. On the day of the accident the victim configured his gear to function as fall restraint in order to work at the cliff's edge and provide instruction to students. The anchor selected by the victim was inadequate for the purpose, as the victim approached the edge and placed tension on the anchor, it failed. The victim fell approximately 70 feet, sustaining fatal injuries.

No secondary fall arrest system was in place.

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 a Type of Violation: Serious

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

In that an employee conducting high-angle rope rescue operator training on a cliff top set himself up on a work restraint and utilized a rhododendron shrub with an unhealthy, 3-inch diameter trunk as an anchor point that subsequently broke off causing a 67-foot fall to a creek bed below in which the impact caused fatal injuries.

Feasible and acceptable method of abatement: Ensure trees used as anchors are no less than 6 inches in diameter, back-tied when possible, are unquestionably sound or "bombproof" if used as a single-point anchor, and used in a multiple-point anchor system if not strong enough as called for in Rescue 3 International's Rope Rescue Operations Manual, Field Guide, and Instructor Handbook, and in NFPA 1006 Section 5.2 (Operations Level Performance-Based Assessments).

Proposed Penalty: \$4,000

Citation 1 Item 1 b Type of Violation: Serious

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

In that an employee conducting high-angle rope rescue operator training on a cliff top set himself up on a work restraint designed to prevent a fall by keeping him in the control zone, but he placed his full weight on the lanyard and leaned out over the cliff into the vertical axis (suspension/climbing zone) without utilizing a fall arrest lanyard and without attaching himself to two ropes and anchors as required.

Feasible and acceptable method of abatement: Ensure that employees exposed to a fall due to working in the vertical axis (suspension/climbing zone) use an additional lanyard in conjunction with a fall arrest lanyard as called for in Rescue 3 International's Rope Rescue Operations Manual, Field Guide, and Instructor Handbook.

Proposed Penalty: \$0

Citation 2 Item 1 Type of Violation: Other-than-Serious

TDLWD Rule 0800-01-03-.03(27)(b)1: The log of all recordable work-related injuries and illnesses (OSHA Form 300 or equivalent), was not completed in the detail as required by the rule.

In that Column F of the OSHA 300 Log requires descriptions of the injury, body part, and cause, but the entries were missing one or more of those three elements in the following instances:

- A. 2022 OSHA 300 Log
- B. 2023 OSHA 300 Log
- C. 2024 OSHA 300 Log

Proposed Penalty: \$400

