A 40-year-old Hispanic day laborer, Juan V.*, died when he fell from a scaffold. Juan was hired from a street corner to apply stone and stucco to the outside of a house. The victim rented, put together, and worked on the scaffold by himself. The homeowner did not know if Juan had any training in scaffold use. The scaffold was put together without guardrails and the walk board was not attached to the scaffold. There was nothing to prevent Juan from falling. As he reached for a cell phone, the walk board moved and Juan fell twelve feet to the ground.

**WHAT WENT WRONG?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Went Wrong?</th>
<th>What Should Be Done?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juan may not have known how to safely use a scaffold.</td>
<td>Employers (including homeowners) should make sure day laborers are trained in the safe use of scaffolds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The walk board shifted when Juan reached for a cell phone.</td>
<td>The scaffold should be properly erected and the walk board should be secured to the scaffold frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was nothing to keep Juan from falling from the scaffold.</td>
<td>Employers should make sure day laborers use guardrails or personal fall protection when working on a scaffold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References:


* Not the victim's real name

For a complete report of this (11CA002) or other cases, and information on the California FACE Program, contact:

California Department of Public Health  
Occupational Health Branch (OHB), FACE Program  
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Third Floor, Richmond, CA 94804  
OHB phone: (510) 620-5757  
CA Relay Service: 711  
Please allow at least ten working days to produce this document in an alternate format.  
Visit our website at: www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb-face
California Department of Public Health
Occupational Health Branch, FACE Program
850 Marina Bay Parkway, Building P, Third Floor
Richmond, CA 94804

October 2012

Ron Chapman, MD, MPH, Director
Health and Human Services Agency
Diana Dooley, Secretary
State of California
Edmund G. Brown, Governor

FACE stands for ‚Fatal Accident and Evaluation_Control‛,
which refers to the process of identifying and preventing
workplace fatalities. The purpose of the FACE program is to
find problems that may cause work-related deaths and
recommend solutions to prevent future fatalities.