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From: Meredith Brown <racer@lanl.gov>
Subject: Yellow Alert: Fall Results in Injury

Title: Fall From Ladder Results in Fractured Vertebra

Identifier: LLNL-1998-002
Date: January 5, 1998

Lesson Learned Statement: Work at elevated levels needs to be thoroughly evaluated.

Discussion of Activities: A subcontractor employee was soldering a pipe while standing 2/3 of the way up a portable ten foot ladder when he lost his balance and fell six feet to the floor below. He was taken to a local hospital where it was determined that he had a fractured vertebra. The individual was doing routine construction work installing argon lines with his trestle ladder set parallel, rather than perpendicular, to the work. As he reached out to work on the lines, the ladder came out from under him and he fell to the floor.

Recommended Actions: Supervisors should assure that employees are properly trained regarding the correct use of ladders. The complexity of the work to be performed should be considered when planning a task that requires work at elevated levels. Also, co-workers and supervisors should monitor activities that have the potential for at-risk behavior.

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Priority Descriptor: Yellow/Caution
DOE Functional Category: Occupational Safety and Health
User-Defined Functional Category:
Keywords: Work Processes
References: Occurrence Report LLNL-1997-26, "Occupational Injury-Fall From Ladder"

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