



Certificate III in Work Health & Safety Online

OLE110 – Case Study Ladder Incident

As a relatively new employee to this worksite, you have been assigned to work with Sam Sparkie doing some general maintenance around the processing plant at the *CEG Resources*, Stoneville Copper operations. You and Sam first met last week when you transferred in from Stoneville plant's port facility at Point Waters where you worked for the previous three months. You had been asked to transfer from the port facility to copper operations at Stoneville because of a support staff shortage. *CEG Resources* is a multi-function, multi-discipline organisation, spread throughout the State.

After receiving your site induction on arrival five days ago, you have been working with Sam who is also to show you around. This involves getting you used to where everything is and how the maintenance department at Stoneville does things. He has tried to do this as best he can but it has been very busy with everyone working flat out during their 12-hour shifts. Sam told you he has already done 13 shifts straight and was looking forward to having a couple of days off. You are a little tired yourself even though you have only worked here since Monday. You are not used to starting work at 0600 and working through to 1800. At Point Waters, you only worked a normal eight hour shift on a nine days on, five days off roster. At Stoneville you will be expected to work with the work crew you have been assigned to; which means days and nights.



It is about 1740 on Friday 21st November. You have just helped Sam carry and position a 10 metre industrial ladder from the maintenance vehicle to a section of the processing plant where there is very little light. Normally not a big issue if all the lights are clean and working. The reason you are here is because an operator reported one of the main floodlights had stopped working and it had been a while since the others had been cleaned.

As Sam gets ready to go up the ladder for the first time, he hands you the documentation for the job. *CEG Resources* is hot on paperwork with documents and procedures for everything it seems. Point Waters was the same with the only difference being the title which says Stoneville Copper instead of Point Waters. You take them from Sam and shove them in the tool bag you are carrying. You should read them but Sam will already have done that. You did sign onto the Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) but you have to do that for every job so didn't really take much notice. After all,

Doc No.: TR-WHS-OLE-110	Approved: Yes	Uncontrolled when printed	Page 1
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the task only calls for you to stand at the bottom of a ladder and help Sam if needed. As you understand it, the Safe Work Instruction (SWI) tells you what to do and the SWMS tells you how to do it safely.

It is fairly dark and getting worse as the sun outside is starting to go below the horizon. Sam had already climbed up and cleaned three of the six flood lights in the affected section of the plant before reaching the one that was not working. You are at the base of the ladder supporting it. This time however, because he had to change over the lamps, he was finding the situation a little difficult. As it is, he has to stand on the top rung of the ladder and support himself against part of the structural framework. He seems fairly comfortable there and appears steady enough. It is obvious Sam has done this before and is not afraid of heights. Sam removes the replacement lamp from the carry bag he has around his shoulder and replaces the faulty lamp. He places the faulty lamp in the carry bag and starts to position himself better on the ladder for his decent back to the ground. As he does this, the ladder appears to fold a little in the middle. This unexpected movement causes Sam to become unbalanced, shaking and moving the ladder out of any secure position. Both ladder and Sam come crashing down. All you could do is move out of the way of the ladder while trying to help break Sam's fall. You just miss trying to catch Sam before he hits the ground, though close enough that he knocks you hard against some structural railing.

As the dust starts to settle, Sam is cursing in pain and frustration, moving around on the ground holding and supporting his left arm. The ladder has come to rest away from both of you, although you notice it has a twist to it and is not sitting as straight on the ground as you might have thought.

In between curses, Sam says he thinks he has broken his arm and needs help.

What are you going to do next?

Regardless of whether you are relatively new to the workforce or have been working for years, as you began reading through this incident, you will already have started thinking about what was likely to happen next, what could or should have been done at various points to prevent the incident, and perhaps how you would feel if this really was you in this situation.

We are going to use this incident as the foundation for presenting the learning materials in this course. It is the reason why we want you to complete each of the competencies in the order we recommend. As you progress, more and more information will come to light into the circumstances surrounding the incident and what alternatives could have been used to prevent it from occurring.

We will be looking at appropriate responses to the incident. What preparation was needed for you to respond quickly and appropriately. What should be your immediate reaction and what do you do during the time Sam is being properly cared for and meeting with your supervisor over the incident.

Doc No.: TR-WHS-OLE-110	Approved: Yes	Uncontrolled when printed	Page 2
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File location: I:\CEG - Training Partnerships\Training Resources\WHS General \Course Materials\1 – Case Study\ Content\OLE110 Case Study Ladder Incident.doc			

We will also be looking at the aftermath of such an incident. Your responsibilities do not end with getting help for Sam or telling your supervisor what happened.

Re-read the incident and think about how you feel about being put in this position. Select the [Ladder Incident Forum](#) (located on the main WHS Portal screen) and tell us a little about who you are, what your real job is and what you want to do in the future. We also want you to tell us about how you think you would feel as Sam's assistant in this situation.

Once you have done this, select the first unit of your course – BSBWHS302 Apply knowledge of WHS legislation in the workplace.

Keep this case study handy. You will need to refer to it throughout your training with us.

Doc No.: TR-WHS-OLE-110	Approved: Yes	Uncontrolled when printed	Page 3
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File location: I:\CEG - Training Partnerships\Training Resources\WHS General \Course Materials\1 – Case Study\ Content\OLE110 Case Study Ladder Incident.doc			