

Falling Beam Overturned a Work Platform

Incident Date: October 18, 2011 / Location: Edmonton, AB / Industry: Construction



AI Teaching Illustration. Conceptual beam movement toward a lift before impact. Layout and rigging are simplified, not an engineered reconstruction.

What Happened

Two ironworkers in separate boom lifts were connecting a roughly 22-metre, seven-tonne I-beam to a warehouse's steel frame. One signalled the crane operator to lower the beam so the slings could be removed. As the other began removing rigging, the structure moved, the beam twisted and a column fell.

The falling beam struck one boom lift and overturned it. The worker was thrown from the basket while still attached by fall protection. Coworkers began CPR and called EMS, but the worker was pronounced dead at the site. The second worker was stranded in the other lift and later rescued.

Why This Became Fatal

The structural collapse struck and overturned the worker's elevated platform. A harness attached to the basket could not prevent the platform itself from falling. The public report describes the movement and collapse but does not establish a complete underlying failure analysis.

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What Safe Looks Like

Confirm stability at every erection stage before releasing support.



1 Verify the Erection Stage

Follow the erection plan and confirm required connections and stability.

2 Plan the Exposure

Plan load paths, lift positions and exclusion areas before raising steel.

3 Coordinate Release

Use agreed signals and a release hold point; stop if any structure moves.

AI Teaching Illustration. Pre-lift hold point; temporary works require site-specific design. **LSR links:** Safe Mechanical Lifting; Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

The November 2012 report states that **all OHS orders were complied with** and that no additional measures were taken. It does **not state whether charges were laid or report a court outcome**. Employer or supervisor convictions and fines therefore remain unconfirmed. This is not a finding that no prosecution occurred.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 Who confirms the frame is stable before crane support or rigging is released?
- 2 Could a moving member strike our platform, its boom or its base?
- 3 What is our response if a column, connection or brace moves unexpectedly?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse work if the erection stage had not been verified safe?

SAFETY COMES FIRST.

Your Right to Refuse – Alberta. You may refuse work you reasonably believe presents an undue hazard: a serious and immediate threat. Promptly report the refusal and reasons to your employer or supervisor. They must investigate. Contact Alberta OHS if unresolved. Take reasonable care not to endanger others. You are protected from reprisal.

Sources: [Alberta OHS investigation F-169447](#), pp. 4, 7-11; summary completed November 21, 2012. [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 20, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.

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