

Worker Crushed by Cinderblock Wall

Incident Date: November 20, 2014 / Location: Calgary, AB / Industry: Construction



AI Teaching Illustration. Shows the detached wall and potential collapse area before injury. Layout, tools and worker position are conceptual.

What Happened

A manager and temporary labourer were removing an exterior cinderblock wall section for a new bay door. They removed surrounding blocks, chipped concrete near the base and cut the vertical reinforcing bars. A section about 2.0 metres wide and 3.4 metres tall remained freestanding.

The manager told the worker to clean up debris, then left for an appointment. While the worker was outside beside the wall, it collapsed outward. No one witnessed the collapse. The manager returned and called 911. Firefighters lifted the wall with extraction equipment; the worker was pronounced dead at the site.

Why This Became Fatal

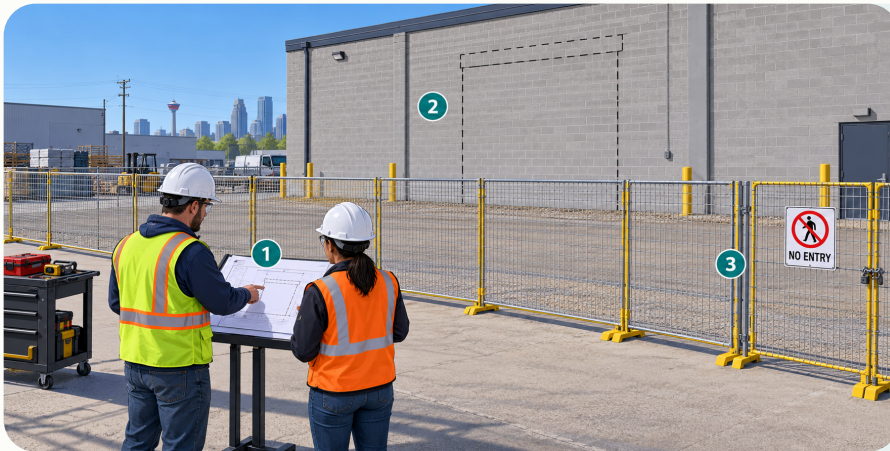
Removing the surrounding blocks and cutting the reinforcement left a freestanding wall beside the worker. Cleanup continued within its collapse area. A lintel supporting the opening above did not prevent the detached section below from falling. The report does not identify what immediately triggered the collapse.

NEVER FORGET.

LET THEIR STORY PREVENT RECURRENCE.

What Safe Looks Like

Plan how each section stays stable before making the next cut.



1 Plan the Sequence

Use competent structural advice and a task-specific removal plan.

2 Maintain Stability

Install specified support before removing structural connections.

3 Exclude the Fall Zone

Keep people clear until unstable sections are safely removed or secured.

AI Teaching Illustration. Pework hold point before cutting; support design is site-specific. **LSR link:** Line of Fire.

Investigation Outcome

The investigation file went to **Alberta Justice on October 28, 2015**. On **November 8, 2016**, Justice **determined that it did not support charges** under OHS legislation. The file closed the next day. The report records no employer or supervisor conviction or fine. Its final signatures are dated June 2017.

Talk It Through with Your Crew

- 1 What could become unstable when we remove a connection, support or wall section?
- 2 Does our plan explain how each stage stays supported, including temporary conditions?
- 3 Could cleanup or another trade put someone inside the collapse area?
- 4 Would you stop or refuse work if the stability of the remaining structure was uncertain?

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-OHS-080094-9297A](#), pp. 2, 8-12; summary completed June 2017 (final signatures). [Alberta refusal guidance](#). Prepared October 20, 2026. LSR links are learning associations, not findings of a breach.