

# **FATAL ALERT**

On April 10, 2013, an employee working in a general industry setting was fatally injured while drilling holes through the top of a 2x6 inch wall plate. At the time of the incident, the employee was sitting on (straddling) a 2x6 exterior wall 11.5 feet above a concrete floor while using a pneumatic hand held drill with a 3 ¼ inch hole saw. The shank of the drill bit had been ground/filed down from a ½ inch diameter to approximately a 3/8 in diameter to fit the drill being used. The employee also did not have the right sized chuck key for tightening the drill's chuck. Prior to the accident, the employee was advised by a co-worker to use a ladder rather than sit on the wall. Unrestrained, the employee apparently lost his balance and fell to the concrete floor. The resulting fatal injury was blunt force head trauma.

## **Significant Factors**

- The employee was not adequately trained to perform the job.
- The employer did not have a written health & safety program that addressed issues associated with general industry (fall protection program, ladders, personal protective equipment (PPE)).
- The employer allowed tools to be modified. The hole saw in use by the employee was modified such that the shaft end of hole saw had been ground/filed down from a ½ inch diameter shaft to approximately 3/8 inch diameter to fit into a 3/8 inch air drill being used at the time of the incident.

## **Recommendations**

- Brief all employees on the facts and circumstances of this fatal mishap.
- Ensure management/employees are trained on OSHA general industry rules applicable to the work being performed.
- Train/retrain all employees on hazard recognition methods to avoid unsafe working conditions.
- Ensure all equipment being used to perform work is appropriate for the task and is in safe working condition.