

FATAL ALERT

On April 25, 2018 four employees and the owner (victim) were working at a single level duplex to fix its foundation and foundation walls. The foundation of the home needed repair because a tree had grown into the foundation and caused structural damage. The victim and one of his employees were tasked to lay concrete block walls. Three employees from the general contractor were tasked with doing the poured concrete at the home including the footer.

On the day of the incident, the victim and his employee were laying out block on the south end of the duplex including mixing grout. Two employees from another contractor were underneath the northwest corner of the home setting up footers. At about 1:00 p.m., the victim and his employee took a 40 minute lunch then resumed work. At approximately 3:00 p.m., a cracking sound was heard and the home shifted to the northwest. Two employees working for the general contractor who were underneath the home were able to crawl out. The employee of the victims company went to the west side of the home to get locations of all employees. He found the victim pinned between the ground and the house. He then used a skid steer with a bucket attachment in an attempt to relieve pressure on the victim by pushing the house but was unable to do so. An employee with other contractors on site began to use a backhoe to dig around the victim. As dirt was being removed around him, emergency services began to arrive at the site.

Significant Factors

- The victim did not have formal training on lifting homes.
- The home did not have support systems to give it lateral stability.
- The potential energy the home had while it was elevated was not adequately controlled.

Recommendations

- Brief all employees about the fatality.
- Identify any permit-required confined spaces at the worksite.
- Develop a confined space program.
- Have support systems to give the lifted home lateral stability.