

# HOW & WHY TO USE: SAFESUPERVISOR'S FATALITY FILES

Work-related deaths are still far too common, even with all the progress that's been made in creating safer workplaces and the adoption of OHS laws designed to protect workers and hold employers accountable for workplace safety.

What makes many of these deaths even more tragic is the fact they could have easily been prevented.

Keep your workers from becoming a fatality file; use these stories of work-related deaths and the lessons learned as part of your training program.

Fatality files are grim, but impactful reminders of how quickly things can go wrong, how dangerous work can be, and how easily a life could have been saved.

When paired with a safety talk and quiz, a fatality file can be an extremely effective tool in frontline safety training. For more resources to improve the resonance and retention of your safety message with frontline staff, go to [www.safesupervisor.com](http://www.safesupervisor.com).

## FATALITY FILES

### Worker Dies While Cleaning a Vat

#### THE CASE

Late in the afternoon, a worker at a manufacturing company was requested to clean out a vat. It was approximately 5 feet deep and 5 feet in diameter. He was instructed to use 1,1,1 – Trichloroethane to do the cleaning.

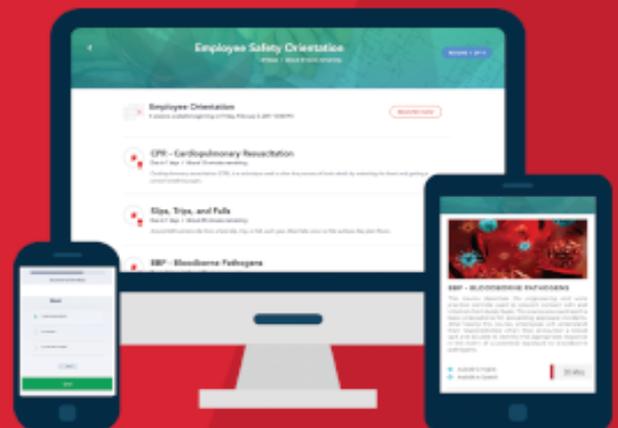
When he did not return home from work that evening, his wife telephoned a relative who also worked at the same company. The missing worker was found lying on his back at the bottom of the vat. He was wearing rubber gloves, work boots and a respirator, but not one which would have prevented the inhalation of toxic vapors. It was also noted that there was no escape ladder for the vat. The victim was observed three times while cleaning the vat, but no one was assigned to check on a regular basis.

During the inquest the witnesses stated there was quite a bit of confusion over which type of respirator they should use for certain hazards. It was also stated there were no clearly posted safety instructions on or near the vat.

This worker obviously tried to protect himself by wearing a respirator, boots and gloves. Unfortunately, he made the wrong choice of respirator. Regular safety training which addresses these and other concerns would have helped prevent this tragedy. Also, a buddy system or a regular check would have

ensured his safety. Confined spaces call for strict procedures, including use of the correct respiratory protection.

# THE FASTEST PATH TO SAFETY AWESOME



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## FATALITY FILES

### Solvent Linked to Suicide



#### THE CASE

Could exposure to a workplace solvent cause someone to commit suicide? A coroner in Wellington, New Zealand, says it could. He conducted an inquest into the death of a worker in the printing industry who stepped in front of a commuter train and was killed instantly. The coroner ruled the victim was suffering from solvent-induced neurotoxicity nervous system effects caused by solvent poisoning. Testimony at the coroner's inquest indicated the victim had been anxious, depressed and suffering from multiple health problems.

The coroner called for more research into the effects of industrial chemicals on workers.

A study by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the United States found

that organic solvents cause acute and chronic effects on the human central nervous system. Changes can include personality and mood shifts such as emotional instability, depression, and diminished impulse control, motivation, concentration, memory and learning capacity.

#### FINAL WORD

NIOSH says the nervous system effects of exposure to organic solvents can cause deaths and increase risk of accidental injury at work and away from the job. The institute has identified areas of research needed on solvents, including tests to determine neurotoxicity, improved monitoring of exposures, better ways to prevent worker exposure and determining to what extent solvent exposure increases injury risk at work and away from work.

# FATALITY FILES

## Worker Falls Headfirst from Raised Forklift Platform

### THE CASE

Standing on a makeshift platform spanning the forks of a lift truck isn't safe. In California, doing so proved lethal for a 29-year-old worker.

Alejandro Valladares fell headfirst about 30 feet (9.1 meters) into a hole from a plywood platform on a forklift. He had been operating a handheld compactor to push down a piling. The vibration caused Valladares to lose his balance and fall into the deep hole.

Making matters worse was the fact that sandy soil in the hole collapsed onto the worker, leaving only part of one of his legs exposed. It took emergency services workers more than two hours to free his body.

It's dangerous enough to stand on a platform haphazardly spanning a forklift's forks, but in this situation the vibration escalated the risk. And the unstable hole was the third hazard that sealed Valladares' fate.

A worker who needs to be in a raised position to perform tasks should be using a properly designed lifting platform, which is firmly secured to the forks and provides guardrails and other safety features. Proper platforms also allow workers to tie themselves off using safety belts.

### FINAL WORD

You have to make sure your employees are trained and aware of any hazards before they use an aerial lift.



**SafetyNow**

JOIN SAFETYNOW'S  
**FREE**  
**SAFETY TALK CLUB!**

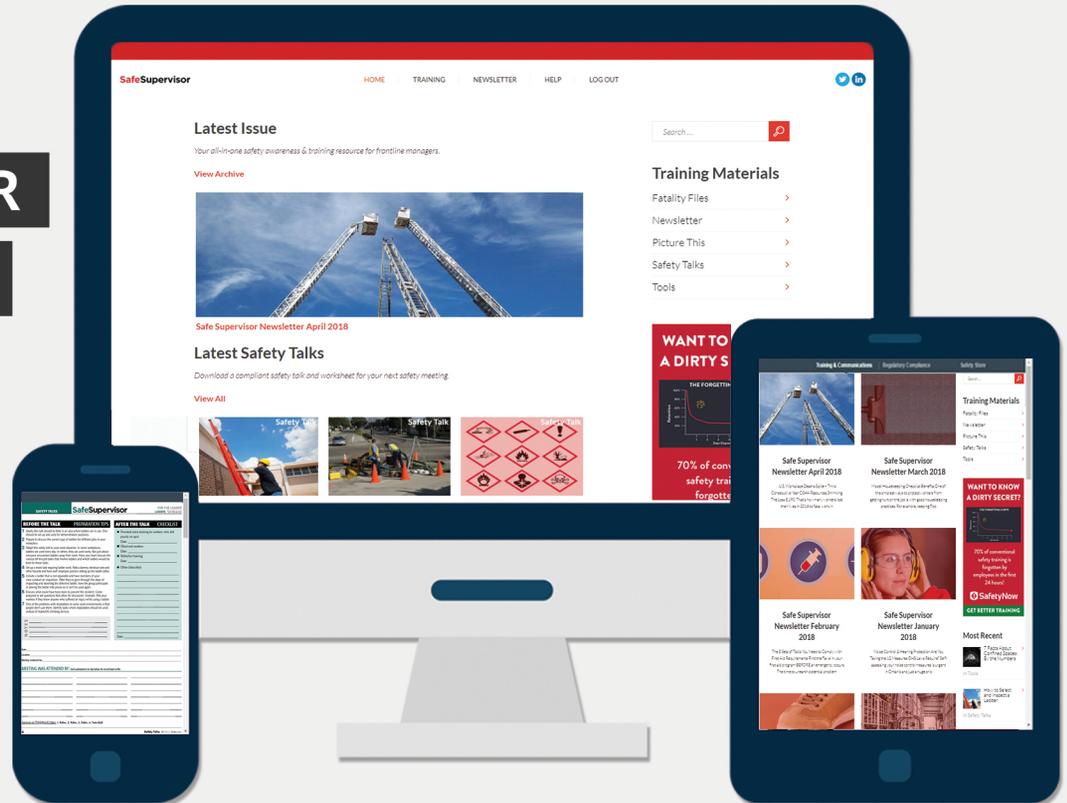
And get 1 instructor-led safety meeting kit each month and much more. All compliant, all ready to go - and all free!

**SIGN UP!**

A thick red L-shaped graphic element, consisting of a horizontal line at the top and a vertical line on the left, framing the central text.

# SafeSupervisor

**ARE YOU READY  
TO ENHANCE YOUR  
SAFETY TRAINING  
PROGRAM AND  
PROTECT YOUR  
WORKERS?**



## What Makes Us Different?

SafeSupervisor saves me time, especially when I have difficulty putting an idea into words to present to others. There are a ton of resources that I can use to keep employees engaged in our regular safety training.

Ron Thomas  
Health & Safety Director



### Ready-to-use Safety Talks

Every month, you'll receive 4 ready-to-use safety talks that you can use as-is, or adapt to your unique workplace. Provide compliant safety training to your employees on today's most critical safety topics.



### Monthly Digest

The monthly digests are packed with practical, proven safety management ideas, tips and techniques you can use to make your employees safer and get better results from your safety program.



### Real-life Fatality Reports

Use the real-life Fatality Reports to drive home a powerful safety message that your employees won't forget, and will help keep them safety aware.



### Training Resource

Nothing is worse than preparing a safety meeting, only to find none of your workers paying attention to it. Keep things interesting with quizzes, spot the violation, games, and more.