



A Bricklayer's Accident Report

Dear Sir:

I am responding to your request for additional information regarding how my recent injury occurred. In block No. 3 of your accident report form, I put "trying to do the job alone" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully. I trust the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 500 pounds of bricks left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at the ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out, and loaded the bricks into it. Then I went back to the ground and untied the rope, holding it tightly to ensure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of bricks. You will note in block No. 2 of the accident report form that my weight is 135 pounds.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence-of-mind and did not let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rather rapid rate up the side of the building.

Near the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains my fractured skull and collarbone.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my right hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley.

Fortunately by this time, I had regained my presence of mind allowing me to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel. Devoid of the weight of bricks, the barrel then weighed approximately 50 pounds.

I refer you again to the information in block No. 2. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building.

Near the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations of my legs and lower body.

The encounter of the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks. Fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked.

I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay in pain on the bricks, unable to stand up and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my presence of mind and let go of the rope. The empty barrel weighed more than the rope so it came down upon me and broke both of my legs. I hope I have furnished the additional information you required as to how the accident occurred.

Discussion Questions

- What could have been done differently to prevent these injuries?
- Do you evaluate the potential hazards of your actions in advance, and adjust or plan accordingly to prevent injury?

