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INCIDENT ALERT

Two workers were tasked with demolishing a floor. The work was in conjunction with upgrading a building. The floor material was constructed of rough cut fir, and supported with 6” by 12” rough cut fir stringers approximately 24 feet in length. Two of the stringers were supported on one end by a 6” BY 12” laminated beam approximately 12 feet long and attached to a brick masonry wall. As one of the workers was walking across the floor, the floor collapsed, dropping approximately 30 feet to the ground level. The worker was stopped from falling to the ground by his fall arrest system and was able to climb back to the remaining floor level. He was uninjured.

LESSONS LEARNED

Upon examining the collapsed floor it was found there was undetected rot in the header supporting the stringers. It was apparent the reason the floor had not previously collapses was because the flooring material was holding three of the stringers in position. Once the material had begun to be removed there was no support and the floor collapsed. Work was immediately stopped in the area, and the entire floor system for the building was inspected for indications of rot or other damage.

The contractor performing the work had required the workers performing leading edge floor demolition to wear fall arrest equipment. Additionally, they had flagged off the area below the work to prevent entry, and had also flagged off the floor where they were working. All of these activities helped assure no one was injured when the collapse occurred.

ACTION ITEMS

1. Talk with your contractor about their approach to assuring worker safety during demolition activities. Particularly, talk with them about procedures surrounding fall protection and securing the work area.

2. Watch for upcoming demolition activities during your planning sessions. Ask the questions about the potential for flooring systems to fail during demolition. Watch to assure your contractors are following the procedures they have outlined in their safety plan.

3. Share this information widely, and talk about the potential for this to occur on your job.

Distribution:
All CPO Staff