Manual-Handling Myths: Safe Lifting, Lowering and Carrying in the Age of Automation Fatality File

Worker Crushed While Manually Moving 800-Pound Stone Slab

A 38-year-old worker, Horacio Prada Dominguez, was fatally crushed while attempting to manually move an approximately 800-pound quartz stone slab at a Rockford, Illinois fabrication business. Dominguez and a coworker were repositioning the slab when it shifted unexpectedly and began to fall toward him. He attempted to brace the slab, but its weight overpowered him and pinned him against another stone slab. First responders freed him, but he had already succumbed to severe crushing injuries.

Investigators reported that the slabs were being moved by hand, without the use of available mechanical lifting aids such as slab clamps, powered hoists, or vacuum-assist lifters. The extreme weight, instability, and size of the material made manual handling inherently dangerous. Autopsy findings confirmed fatal head and body crush trauma.

This incident illustrates the critical risks of manual material handling in modern industrial environments, especially when workers attempt to lift or stabilize loads far exceeding safe human capability. Automated or mechanical lifting systems are essential to prevent these catastrophic “caught-between” and crushing events.

Source: Wsaw.com