

Injured Philly iron worker wins \$3 M settlement

Charles Twilley fell when a safety devices' steel cable snapped

Iron worker Charles Twilley was walking along a steel beam on the third floor of a construction site at the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia when he reached down and was suddenly jerked backwards by the lifeline retractable device attached to his safety harness.

Twilley lost his balance and fell, left dangling from an overhead beam by the safety device's steel cable. But the cable broke and Twilley plunged roughly 14 feet, slamming onto the metal decking below.

The 41-year-old Philadelphia resident suffered a variety of injuries in the 2005 incident, including a broken shoulder and nerve damage to his neck, right hand and lower back. He was also diagnosed with traumatic brain injury that affected his mental state, leaving him sometimes disoriented, agitated and feeling nervous.

In January 2008 Twilley won a \$3 million settlement as a result of a lawsuit against several defendants in the case, including the project construction manager, a subcontractor and the manufacturer of the retractable device, Mechanical Safety Equipment Corp. Also named in the suit were distributors of the steel cable, Fortune Rope Metal Co. and DSR International.

The retractable device had not been used on any other job sites and had only been in use at the university site for about a month before the mishap.

Twilley was represented in the case by Dominic Guerrini of the Philadelphia-based law firm Kline & Specter, P.C.

“This was a tragic case of an unsafe workplace environment caused, ironically, by the very device that was supposed to have safeguarded the employee,” said Guerrini. “As a result, this hard-working ironworker lost his livelihood.”

