

Dear Sir:

I understand you were inclined not to accept my recent unannounced absence from work based on our brief telephone conference. Therefore I undertook the task of preparing this letter to better explain the uncontrollable circumstances behind my sudden absence this past week and humbly submit it for your kind consideration.

I sacrificed my entire weekend and volunteered to help re-shingle the roof of a good friend who had not kept his home in good repair after his wife left him when she caught him in the company of an out-of-work dancer who was working her way through college. (*I was witness to that event because he wanted to borrow money from me to lend to her, but I had just lent some well-deserved funds to her sister who was another aspiring college enrollee.*) Always possessing a generous and selfless heart (*admittedly too big for my own good*), I purchased the shingles and other materials at great expense (*having to deplete my emergency medical funds for future chiropractic treatments resulting from when I injured myself carrying the aforementioned pre-college student across a large rain puddle to the limo so she wouldn't get her white boots muddied*).

We began work with great resolve and *high spirits*. I raised an extension ladder to the roof to attach a block-and-tackle to the overhanging eave to raise the heavy bucket of shingles. I threaded the overly **coarse** (*remember 'coarse' because it is important later on*) rope through the pulley and proceeded down the ladder. At that point I noticed a mother bird tending her nest which was resting in the rain gutter which the ladder was leaning against. My heart went out to her and I offered a couple of raisins I had in my pocket. This momentary surge of humanitarian compassion caused me to lose my grip on the ladder and my feet slipped on the rungs and I began falling down its length. Perhaps my descent was spared achieving potentially fatal *acceleration* because the ladder was at a moderate angle to the building and my chin kept hitting each successive rung. In a daze I found myself sitting on the ground with a severely sprained ankle and unable to speak because of the repeating poundings my throat had to endure all the way down the ladder.

Fortunately I had the good sense to hold onto the rope with my other hand so I wouldn't have to climb the ladder again to re-thread it into the pulley. *Down-but-not-out-for-the-count* and anything for a friend, I loaded the oversized bucket with the heavy shingles and in the process stressed my back from when I injured it previously (*see above*). The bucket when filled weighed more than me but less than our combined body weights. So it required both of us to hoist it to the eave of the roof. Never having been accused of possessing a sound mind, my friend told me to hold on to the rope while he found a stake to drive into the ground and tie the end of the rope onto. I tried to object as he turned away and released the rope, but I couldn't make a sound due to the injuries my throat and larynx received (*see above*).

The mass of the loaded bucket was now greater than my body weight and before I knew it I was airborne. Newton's laws of motion applied here and the bucket was accelerating downward at the standard  $g \text{ 32ft/sec}^2$  minus my body weight. About halfway up I met the bucket and received a severe blow to my rib cage (*which I suspect broke some ribs and maybe punctured a lung*). Before I was able to break contact with it the bucket continued its descent and delivered a crushing blow to my other ankle (*the 'good'*

*ankle, not the one that I injured when I fell down the ladder). Finally we separated and I accelerated upwards to the block-and-tackle (at the same {g 32ft/sec<sup>2</sup>-(body weight)} rate but in the (minus) direction because I was going 'up'). About that time the bucket made contact with the **brick** patio (remember 'brick' because it is important later on) and I jammed my fingers in the pulley resulting in severely dislocating numerous joints in my writing hand (which is partly why I was unable to compose this letter last week).*

I guess it was the pain that caused me to jerk myself free rather than attempt to climb onto the roof. The bucket had come into contact with the patio, spilling its load and loosening many of the rough-edged (*remember 'rough-edged' because it is important later on*) bricks it landed upon. Now my body mass exceeded that of the empty bucket and I had hold of the coarse rope in my remaining good hand when I started downward (*again accelerating at the same aforementioned rate as the bucket*). About halfway down I met the bucket again. This time its rim connected mightily in my groin area (*and effectively ruined plans I had made to contribute to that same poor girl's college funds later that weekend if I had any money left from this project*). My *terminal* velocity at ground zero was greater than it was when the bucket intercepted me at approximately the midpoint of my descent. Consequently I hit the hard patio with such force I think I shattered my tailbone. And the bricks that were loosened by the shingle-laden bucket caused severe lacerations to my forearms and shins.

At this point I must have lost my *presence of mind* for I loosened my grip on the coarse rope. The empty bucket now resting against the pulley was now heavier than the counteracting force I was applying to the rope so it started accelerating downwards again at *g 32ft/sec<sup>2</sup> minus* the feeble force I was offering as resistance. I received severe rope burns and fiber splinters in both injured (*see above*) hands from allowing the *coarse* rope to slide through my weakened grip so easily. The bucket soon achieved approximately the same terminal velocity I had accomplished and its momentum (= mass x velocity) crashed against my skull causing me to receive a concussion and *recurring* periods of unconsciousness.

It is with great physical pain and the assistance of the aforementioned college-bound females that I am able to author this letter of explanation to you. Before I close could I implore upon you to inquire as to see if I qualify for S.S.I. or at least Workers' Comp?

Your faithful employee,