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Man Survives 70 Foot Fall.

"I was hanging on, but there really was nothing to hang on to," said 21 year old Russell Richardson this morning from a bed on St. Vincent's eighth floor.

The young man is listed in fair condition with multiple leg injuries from a 70 foot fall after his support cable broke Friday afternoon while he was working on a television tower on Scray's Hill.

Richardson said he was strapped into his safety belt and the belt was hooked onto a suspended cable for support while he was working with the system for the educational station.

The cable broke and sent him falling about 16 feet a second. He landed on top a concrete roof of a one story building at the bottom of the tower.

The accident happened about 3:30 pm. Richardson said he thought it was raining at the time.

He said he didn't realize he was falling the first 20 feet because it almost felt as if someone had loosened the break on the truck to let him down quickly.

"We do that sometimes," he said.

He said he wondered why the fellow was letting him down so soon because he hadn't given him the signal. The he looked up and saw his cable dangling and knew he was falling.

"It feels like you'd better get hold of something quick,' he said when asked how it felt to be falling.

Richardson said he tried to grab the cable, but it was so slick from the rain that it did no good except to keep him upright.

"It's just like holding onto an icicle," he said. "All it did was help me land upright."

Richardson is from Boonville, Mo. He works for the Communication Tower Co., which has its headquarters in Franklin, Mo.

"I haven't been doing it too long," he said, and added he would get back into the business "if I can."

The young man explained that tower workers don't usually practice landing for falls, because it doesn't matter whether you're falling from 60, 80, or 100 feet. You fall at the same speed, and the speed is what is dangerous.

"It doesn't do any good to practice falling," he asserted.

Richardson said the concrete he landed on had been poured that morning.