

Fall Prevention

Falls remain the leading cause of fatalities in the construction industry, accounting for an alarming 39% of all construction deaths in 2017. With over 800 fatal on-the-job injuries annually, construction consistently ranks as the most dangerous sector for fall-related incidents. This review outlines essential information for preventing falls and fostering a safer working environment.

Understanding Fall Hazards

Recognizing fall hazards is the crucial first step in prevention. Falls can occur from a variety of activities and conditions, including:

- Working from ladders, scaffolds, scissor lifts, and boom lifts.
- Work on rooftops, near skylights, floor holes, excavations, or pier holes.
- Using makeshift platforms, or inside attics and overhead crawlspaces.
- During road construction on bridges and overpasses.
- Open-sided floors, roof edges, and leading edges.
- Hazards stemming from equipment or tool failure, slips, overreaching, or complacency.

A Few OSHA Standards for Fall Protection...

OSHA Standard	Requirement
1926.501(b)(1)	Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems. In general construction activities, fall protection is required when working at heights above 6 feet from a lower level.
1926.501(b)(8)(i)	Each employee less than 6 feet (1.8 m) above dangerous equipment shall be protected from falling into or onto the dangerous equipment by guardrail systems or by equipment guards.
1926.451(g)(1)	Each employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet (3.1 m) above a lower level shall be protected from falling to that lower level. When working on scaffolds, employees must have fall protection, such as guardrails, installed when they are more than 10 feet above a lower level.

Effective Fall Prevention Strategies

A comprehensive approach involving the right equipment, thorough training, and careful planning is essential.

- **The Right Equipment:** Always use appropriate fall protection systems such as guardrails, safety nets, personal fall arrest systems, and correctly rated ladders or scaffolding. Inspect all equipment for damage before each use.
- **Training:** Comprehensive training ensures workers can identify fall hazards, understand the proper use, maintenance, and inspection of fall protection equipment. Know your responsibilities and how to react in an emergency.
- **Planning & Practices:** Before beginning any work, evaluate the site, identify potential fall hazards, and develop a clear plan, including an emergency response. Clear work surfaces of debris, avoid climbing on unintended items, and ensure scaffolding is erected and regularly inspected by qualified persons. OSHA standards require fall protection at 6 feet (or 10 feet for scaffolds).

Ask the Crew:

1. What specific fall protection equipment is required for my task today, and how do I properly inspect it before use?
2. Where are the designated anchor points or safe zones for my personal fall arrest system in this specific work area?
3. Who is the designated competent person on site I can speak to immediately if I identify a new or unrecognized fall hazard?





Safety Meetings/Training Sign In

Sheet Company Name: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Instructor: _____

Topic: _____

Attending Employees

Print Name (Write Legibly)

Signature

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