

Communication Tower Safety Talk

Working on communication towers isn't just another day on the job, it's one of the most dangerous roles in the field. Whether you're climbing to install antennas, inspect equipment, or perform routine maintenance, you're dealing with serious risks: extreme height, shifting weather, electrical exposure, and the pressure to work fast while staying safe.

Falls are the leading cause of death in tower work, and nearly all of them are preventable. That's why OSHA has strict safety standards in place, and why it's critical that everyone on-site commits to following them without compromise.

Typical Challenges and Dangers

- Falls from height
- Structural collapse
- Electrical contact
- Falling tools or equipment
- Fatigue, dehydration, or heat stress
- Miscommunication during emergency rescue

Fall Protection: No Exceptions

- Use a full-body harness with a double lanyard or personal fall arrest system.
- Stay tied off to an approved anchor point that can handle at least 5,000 lbs.
- Maintain 100% tie-off from the moment your feet leave the ground.
- Inspect all gear — harnesses, lanyards, and connectors — before each climb.
- Never unclip both lanyards at once. Never climb without full PPE. And never assume a short climb is a safe one.

Climbing Smart: The Habits That Keep You Alive

- Climb with purpose and control. Maintain three points of contact at all times.
- Watch for hazards like loose bolts, ice, or damaged rungs.
- Secure your tools with tethers; a dropped wrench from height is a deadly weapon.
- Stay in touch: use radios or communication devices and check in with the ground crew regularly.
- Know your limits. Don't climb if you're sick, overtired, or on medication that could impair your judgment.
- Stop immediately if your fall protection is compromised or the structure feels unstable.



If something feels off, say something. You're responsible for your own safety and for protecting those around you.

Weather and Environmental Hazards

Because tower work takes place in the open, the environment can change fast. Be prepared for:

- **High winds** can shift your balance or send equipment swinging.
- **Lightning:** towers act like lightning rods. Never climb during a storm.
- **Extreme heat:** stay hydrated and rest when needed to prevent heat exhaustion.
- **Freezing conditions:** cold steel is slick and unstable. Watch for ice and wear proper gloves and boots.

Always check the weather before starting the job. If it's unsafe, delay the climb.

Rigging and Lifting: Stay Clear and Stay Focused

- Use tag lines to control loads and avoid spin or swing.
- Stay out of the load path. Never walk or stand beneath suspended equipment.
- Inspect rigging gear before use. Damaged slings or ropes can fail without warning.
- Communicate clearly with your lift team. Use radios or hand signals, not guesswork.
- Always keep an eye on overhead hazards like beams, wires, or structural features.

Make sure you:

- Know the job-specific rescue plan and how to trigger it.
- Have rescue equipment on site: ladders, retrieval systems, first aid, and trained responders.
- Understand the specific hazards of the tower, including chemical, electrical, or environmental risks.
- Know the location of the nearest hospital or emergency response unit.

Summary

There's no casual approach to communication tower work. One missed check, one overlooked hazard, one disconnected lanyard, and the outcome can be catastrophic. Respect the risk, stick to the protocols, and never take shortcuts with your safety.

Discussion Points:

- *What would you do if the wind picked up suddenly during your climb?*
- *Do you know your site's emergency rescue plan and your role in it?*