



Fall Protection

Overview

Many employees in general industry climb up and down ladders, walk on stairs, or work on elevated surfaces which have unprotected sides and edges. These tasks can often present fall hazards. OSHA says that exposure to fall hazards poses a “significant risk” of death or serious physical harm to workers in general industry workplaces.

These workers must be provided with appropriate fall protection when required and training, which must include information so that the employee is able to:

- Recognize fall hazards in their work area,
- Minimize these hazards, and
- Correctly install, set-up, inspect, operate/use, maintain, disassemble, and/or store the systems and equipment provided to them for fall protection.

Understanding the hazard

Some falls can cause more severe injuries than others. Falls from the same level involve slips and trips (that result in) falling to the floor or the ground. These types of falls have a high frequency rate, but typically a low injury severity rate.

Falls from an elevation involve falling from one level to another. Examples include falling from a scaffold to the ground below. These types of falls have a relatively low frequency rate, but a high injury severity rate that can include lost-work days, permanent disability, and death.

Fall protection

Fall protection must be provided if an employee is assigned a job that exposes them to a fall hazard **four feet or more above a lower level** (and regardless of height in certain situations, such as working above dangerous equipment).

Types of fall protection in general industry include the following:

- **Covers**—A secure, removable cap used to protect employees from falling into holes in floors, roofs, skylights, manholes, pits, and other walking-working surfaces.
- **Designated areas**—A distinct portion of a low-slope roof, *at least* six feet from the edge, designated by a warning line in which employees may perform work without additional fall protection.



- **Guardrails**—A physical vertical barrier consisting of a top rail, midrail, and posts used to prevent employees from falling from the unprotected or exposed sides and edges of walking-working surfaces, like a platform or mezzanine.
- **Handrails and stair rail systems**—A handrail is rail used as a handhold for support to assist employees going up or down stairways, ramps, or other walking-working surfaces.
- A stair rail system is a type of barrier to protect employees from falling over the edge of an open-sided stairway.
- **Personal fall protection**—A system used to provide protection from falling or to safely arrest an employee’s fall if one occurs.
- **Ladder safety systems**—A system to prevent an employee from falling from a fixed ladder.
- **Safety nets**—A horizontal or semi-horizontal barrier that uses a netting system to catch and stop falling employees, as well as tools and equipment, before they make contact with the surface or structures below.

Housekeeping

High traffic areas should be kept free of tools, materials, debris, or liquids that could create slippery surfaces. Fall protection equipment, such as harnesses, should be properly stored to prevent damage.

Reporting fall hazards

Reporting fall hazards is part of any effective safety effort. Instruct employees to report unsafe equipment, conditions, or procedures. State that under no circumstances should defective fall protection be used.

Training Tips

Review 1910 Subpart D, “Walking-Working Surfaces,” and the employee handout. List work areas or tasks that present fall hazards in the facility. Train employees to recognize and avoid the hazards involved with their work, and how to correctly use the fall protection equipment and systems provided to them.

Where To Go For More Information

29 CFR 1910, Subpart D, “Walking-Working Surfaces”

29 CFR 1910, Subpart I, “Personal Protective Equipment”



Sample Safety Meeting Agenda

1. Accidents, injuries, near-misses, discuss:

- Incidents that have occurred in your company since the last meeting.
- Any follow-up that has been done as a result of investigations into incidents.
- Incidents that have happened in other companies.
- Updates to the company's Accident Prevention Plan from "lessons learned."

2. Results of safety inspections.

- Discuss the results of recent safety inspections.
- Follow up on assignments for eliminating or controlling identified hazards.
- Encourage employees to identify any unsafe conditions or tasks.
- Discuss ways to eliminate or control the hazards.
- When appropriate, assign responsibilities for eliminating or controlling identified hazards.

3. Training.

- Discuss any new safe work procedures or other policies and procedures that need to be implemented.
- Safety Topic of the Month: a presentation and discussion on the chosen topic.

4. Open forum.

- Any one who has a concern about safety and health should bring it up for discussion.

5. Next meeting.

- Set the time, date, and place for the next meeting.
- Select a Safety Topic and designate the presenter/discussion leader.



Employee Sign-in Sheet

Persons attending this meeting:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

