



Train. Protect. Prevent.

Focus 4 Hazards—Fall Protection

Why is fall protection important? – The Facts

Falls from heights are the leading cause of fatalities in construction. One of every five workplace fatalities is a construction worker. Falls from elevations account for one third of all deaths in construction. Ten percent of all fatal falls occur from heights below 6 feet.

Where do fall hazards occur?

Falls from elevated locations are present at most every jobsite, and many workers are exposed to these hazards daily. Any walking/working surface could be a potential fall hazard. An unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8m) or more above a lower level should be protected from falling by the use of a guardrail system, safety net system, or personal fall arrest system. These hazardous exposures exist in many forms, and can seem as harmless as changing a light bulb from a step ladder to something as high-risk as working on a rooftop at 200 feet in the air.

How should I protect myself?

Your employer has taken the time and expense to train you to recognize fall hazards. Training may also include the proper use of a personal fall protection system, such as a body harness, lanyard/retractable, and an anchorage point. All parts of a fall protection system is designed to work with each other and protect you in the event of an unseen condition which could cause you to fall. It is your responsibility to inspect your equipment for damage and wear. If you notice anything that would lead you to question your equipment, you are required to immediately, before use, to notify your supervisor.

What should I look for while inspecting my equipment?

Your personal fall arrest system is made up of an anchorage, connecting device, and a fullbody harness. The connecting device may be a lanyard with snaphooks, or a self-retracting lifeline. A lanyard could also include a deceleration device. Make sure you are using components from the same manufacturer to ensure that the system works as it should. If your equipment shows any signs of unusual wear, cuts, or a malfunctioning locking device, do not use it.

Fatal Facts

An employee was standing on a six-inch wide plank laid between two adjacent I-beams 14 feet above a concrete floor. He was using a jackhammer to chip away an old concrete and brick floor from a horizontal I-beam. Apparently he lost his balance and fell to the floor below, sustaining fatal head injuries. He was not wearing any fall protection gear nor were floor openings guarded by standard railings and toe boards or covers. As a result of its investigation, OSHA issued citations for one repeat, two serious and two other than serious violations of its construction standards. Had guard rails been installed or the employee worn fall protective gear, the accident probably would not have occurred.

Work Site Review: Hazards/Safety Suggestions

Company Name: _____

Work Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____

Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employee Signatures: (continue on back of sheet if necessary)

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced, or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

Manager/Supervisor's Signature: _____

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