



Toolbox Talks

Work at Heights



Protect Yourself! Prevent Falls from Heights

- If you are working at 6 feet or more, or there is something dangerous below, use fall protection.
 - Before starting any job, ensure there is a fall prevention plan in place.
 - Confirm that you have the correct equipment to complete the job safely.
 - Make sure that you have been trained to use the equipment safely. If you have questions, ask!
 - Guard or cover every floor hole that someone can accidentally walk into.
 - Inspect your equipment before use – including your fall protection and prevention equipment as well as any equipment you may be using, climbing, or working from.
- When working at heights, fall protection can be provided through the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems. OSHA refers to these systems as *conventional fall protection*.
- In general, it is better to use fall prevention systems like guardrails, rather than fall protection systems like safety nets or fall arrest devices, because they actually prevent falls.
- Survey the work area for fall hazards before work begins or any time there may be new hazards.
- When workers are exposed to a fall of 6 feet or more above a lower level ensure there is a guardrail, a safety net, and/or a personal fall arrest system.

OSHA Standard 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 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.

Safety precautions when fall hazards are a danger on the job site:

- Cover or guard floor holes as soon as they are created. Skylights are considered “holes” and workers must be protected from stepping into, falling onto, or tripping into them.
- Construct all scaffolds according to the manufacturer’s instructions and install guardrail systems along all open sides.
- Inspect ladders before use and follow ladder safety guidelines at all times. Ensure that the weight placed on the ladder will not cause it to slip.
- In hoist areas, if a worker is required to lean through or out over the edge of the access opening to receive or guide equipment and materials, a personal fall arrest system must be used to protect the worker from falling through the unprotected opening.

