

Fall Protection Measures

Does this apply to me?

According to 29 CFR 1926.500 Subpart M—Fall Protection

- If you have any work that is 6 feet or more above a lower surface you must have fall protection in place for your workers.
- This does not apply to scaffolds, ladders or steel erection which have their own OSHA requirements.
- Some jobsites may have requirements that ANY work that is 6 feet or more in height must have a jobsite fall protection plan in place.

What does this cover?

OSHA rules require that all workers are protected from falling after they are exposed to a fall of more than 6 feet which includes all working areas. Some examples would be:

Floors on multi-story buildings

Make sure that workers are protected by guardrails. Guardrails should be inspected to make sure they are not loose or damaged. If guardrails are removed workers should use a personal fall protection system like a full body harness and lanyard to protect them.

Interior floor openings like stairways, elevator shafts and pits

Guardrails must be installed around all these when there is a drop of 6 feet or more.

Roofing work and skylights

There are different options available for roofing work such as warning lines and safety monitors but these can only be used to protect workers who are actually installing roofing materials. If skylights are on the roof, then guardrails or covers will have to be used, even during roofing work.

Working on concrete forms

Workers can use work positioning lanyards when they are installing bolts or tying rebar but have to use other personal fall protection equipment when over 6 feet. Double lanyards or self-retracting lifelines, tied off overhead, can provide 100% fall protection.

Installing precast planks, which is called Leading Edge work

Since the edge where falls could happen is always moving this is called a “leading edge.” Since installing guardrails would be difficult, there are other options that can be used such as fall restraint. Fall restraint keeps workers from falling by not allowing them to get too close to the leading edge. However, guardrails still need to be installed on the sides and only workers installing precast planks are allowed in the area.

Building a brick or concrete block wall from the interior of the building

If guardrails can't be installed workers can use a controlled access zone in some cases. This is an area that is taped off to keep other workers out. However, consider using fall restraint for workers building the wall.

Falling objects like tools or materials that could be dropped

Anything falling on a worker can cause serious injury. Remind your workers to keep out of areas that are taped off due to overhead work. If your workers are dropping materials due to their work, like stripping forms, have the area below taped off and tell other contractors to keep out. Once the work is done, make sure you remove the "Danger Zone" tape and signs.

What else do I need to know?

OSHA inspectors will be looking for fall hazards and want to know what your company is doing to protect workers. You need to have a competent person who knows what your fall hazards are and also knows how to use, install and inspect the fall protection systems (guardrails, covers, personal fall protection) that will be used to protect your workers.

What about training?

All your workers have to be trained to understand how to use the fall protection system(s) you have in place for their protection. It may be a fairly simple program if you are just using guardrails but gets more complicated when you have them wear personal fall protection or work in controlled access zones.

- Make sure they are trained before they start work so they know how to protect themselves.

- Training needs to be provided by a competent person, someone who understands fall protection hazards and equipment.
- Document the training and keep records on file.

The Competent Person

You should designate someone from your company to be your "Fall Protection Competent Person." OSHA may ask who the person is, so be prepared. Make sure you have given this appointed person the proper support, which may require several days of training. This person must know all the OSHA requirements and even the manufacturer requirements for full body harnesses, lanyards and self-retracting lifelines. This person can also help in planning what fall protection would work best and develop a jobsite fall protection plan which you may have to provide to a client or general contractor.

Where can I get more help?

The Hanover Risk Solutions website has additional information that you can review or use for worker training. Additional resources can also be found on the OSHA website and they even have a dedicated place just for Fall Protection at <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/fallprotection/index.html>



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