

 Date: September 14, 2020

**Fall Protection**

Falls are a leading cause of serious injuries and fatalities that occur in the workplace. According to statistics published [the Bureau of Labor Statistics](https://www.bls.gov/iif/oshwc/cfoi/cftb0293.pdf) in 2014, 261,930 private industry and state and local government workers missed one or more days of work due to injuries from falls on the same level or to lower levels, and 798 workers died from such falls. The construction industry in particular experiences a large number of these fatalities.

**What Causes Falls in the Workplace?**

The risk for falls is virtually present in every single workplace, however, the factors that can lead to a fall varies greatly. There are many specific [unsafe acts](https://www.safetytalkideas.com/safetytalks/unsafe-acts/) by employees as well as unsafe conditions that lead to fall incidents. Falls often result from a series of contributing factors. They are often the result of multiple unsafe conditions and unsafe actions combined. Because of this fact, it is important to look at unsafe conditions as well as unsafe actions to recognize hazardous situations when working at heights.

**Unsafe Conditions that Lead to Falls**

* Unguarded leading edges
* Open holes
* Improper guardrails
* Damaged equipment (ladders, stairs, safety equipment, etc.)
* Slippery conditions
* Unmarked elevation changes

**Unsafe Actions that Lead to Falls**

* Working at heights without fall protection or fall prevention methods in place
* Improper use of ladders
* Leaning over guardrails

**Best Practices to Avoid Falls in the Workplace**

The best way to avoid falls is by eliminating work tasks that require working at heights in the first place. Obviously elimination is not always possible so the risk of falling has to be mitigated through safeguards.

* Engineering controls such as physical barriers and guardrails are two fall prevention systems that are effective in preventing falls from heights.
* Using a proper fall arrest system such as a full body harness, self-retracting lanyard, and approved anchor point with 100% tie-off is another way to prevent or mitigate the consequences of a fall.
* Proper use of [ladders](https://www.safetytalkideas.com/safetytalks/ladder-safety/). This includes using three points of contact when climbing, not leaning to one side while on the ladder, setting the ladder at the proper angle, securing the ladder, etc.
* Proper housekeeping in work areas is important in preventing falls at the same level as well as falls from heights.
* Warning signs and other methods of communicating fall hazards to nearby workers.

**PLEASE READ AND UNDERSTAND THIS IMPORTANT DOCUMENT AND SIGN ON THE REVERSE SIDE THAT YOU HAVE DONE SO.**

**YOUR SIGNATURE ON THE REVERSE SIDE INDICATES THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE CONTENTS OF THIS DOCUMENT!**

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Phone 614-473-1050 Fax 614-473-1359 email: BTipton@IECCentralOH.org website: [www.IECCentralOH.org](http://www.IECCentraloh.org)