

FALL PREVENTION

SMALL STEPS FOR BIG IMPACT: PREVENTING FALLS

With the onset of fall, the importance of workplace safety is paramount. Fatalities caused by falls from elevation continue to be the leading cause of death for construction employees, accounting for 378 of the 986 construction fatalities recorded in 2021 (BLS data).

While many companies have safety protocols in place, there are still far too many cases where a lack of proper fall prevention results in serious injury or even death. It is essential for employers to understand that taking proactive steps to prevent falls can save lives, lower medical costs and increase productivity.

Fall hazard is defined as:

Anything at your worksite that could cause you to lose your balance or lose bodily support and result in a fall.

MAJOR TYPES OF FALL HAZARDS IN CONSTRUCTION:

Unprotected roof edges, roof and floor openings,
structural steel and leading edges

Improper scaffold construction

Unsafe portable ladders

GENERAL GUIDANCE

Scaffold work

Requires guardrails or PFAS on any platform
10 feet or higher

Prohibit climbing cross braces as means of access;
use ladders or stairway, ramps, etc.

Have a competent person determine the feasibility
and safety of providing fall protection for workers
erecting or dismantling scaffolds

Ladder

Use ladders only on stable and level surfaces unless
secured to prevent accidental movement

Do not load ladders beyond their maximum intended
load nor beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity

Do not move, shift or extend ladders while in use

PROTECTIVE MEASURES FROM FALL HAZARDS

In construction, there are three generally acceptable
methods of protection for workers who are exposed
to vertical drops of 6 feet or more.

Safety net systems are designed to catch you and
break your fall. They must be placed as close as
practicable under your working surface, but never
more than 30 feet below.

Guardrails are considered prevention systems, as
they stop you from having a fall in the first place.

A personal fall arrest system (PFAS) consists of an
anchorage, connectors, and a full-body harness that
work together to break your fall.

FALL PROTECTION STRATEGIES

PLAN. Employers develop a plan to ensure proper
equipment, material, and appropriately trained
workers are available.

PROVIDE. Employers must provide fall protection
and the right equipment for the job (e.g., correct
ladders, scaffolds, and safety gear).

TRAIN. Employers train workers in hazard recogni-
tion and in the care and safe use of ladders,
scaffolds, fall protection systems, and other
equipment used on the job.

Stay Informed of Workers Rights: [OSHA.GOV/WORKERS](https://www.osha.gov/workers)

For more information, please contact HIOSH at:
dlir.hiosh.ct@hawaii.gov or 808-586-9100

