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

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.

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

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

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY Dial 711 then ask for (808) 586-9116.