

Low-Slope Work (for General Industry)

Between 2014 and 2021, falls to lower level account for 7% of all non-construction fatalities nationwide – (2,178) of the 32,670 cases (year 2019 is excluded because BLS data was not available). In Hawai'i, falls have consistently been the second most common cause of workplace fatalities from 2019 through 2022.

Goal of this fact sheet is to significantly reduce or eliminate unprotected worker exposures to fall-related hazards that can result in serious injuries and death.

Risks for General Industry

General Industry workers on low-slope roofs – low-slope is a roofing system with a pitch equal or less than 4:12, meaning it rises less than 4 inches vertically for every 12 inches of horizontal run – face significant fall hazards because even routine tasks can bring them unexpectedly close to an unprotected edge. HIOSH is particularly concerned about situations where workers become distracted—whether by tools, equipment checks, or environmental conditions—and unintentionally drift into the danger zone. A momentary loss of balance, a misstep on loose material, or a sudden change in footing can quickly turn into a serious or fatal fall.

Managing Risks

The following categories outline the fall protection (FP) options available to employers based on three key factors: how far workers are from an unprotected edge, how often the task is performed, and how long the task lasts.

These criteria help determine the appropriate level of protection needed to keep workers safe while performing tasks on low-slope roofs in General Industry.

1. Work <6ft from edge

If the employee is working less than 6 feet from the edge, then the employer must provide conventional fall protection systems (CFPS) such as guardrail system, safety net system, travel restraint, or personal fall arrest system.

2. Work 6ft ≤ x < 15ft from edge

When work is performed between 6 feet and 15 feet from the roof edge, the employer must protect each employee by using conventional fall protection systems (i.e., guardrail system, safety net system, travel restraint, or personal fall arrest system).

However, if the work in this zone is both *infrequent*¹ and *temporary*², the employer may instead establish and use a designated area (DA).

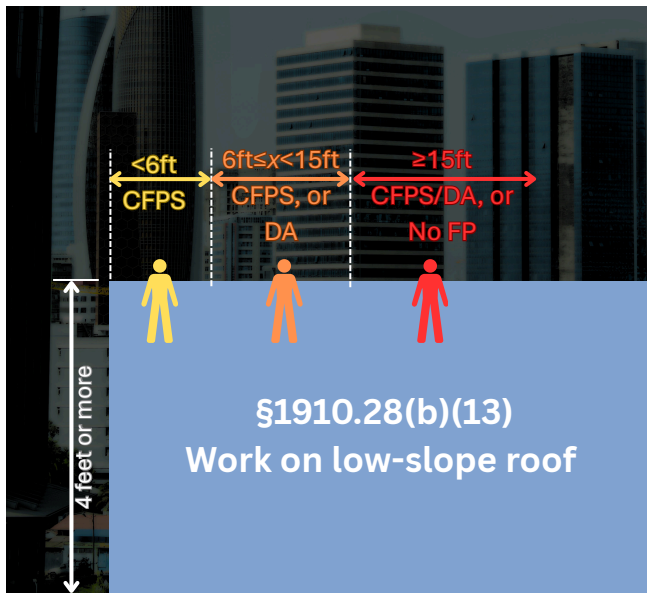
A designated area means a distinct portion of a walking-working surface delineated by a warning line (lines and stanchions) in which employees may perform work without additional fall protection.

3. Work ≥15ft from Edge

When work is performed 15 feet or more from the roof edge, the employer must either provide conventional fall protection systems.

Another option is to use a designated area like previously mentioned.

Finally, the third option if work is both *infrequent*¹ and *temporary*², in which case fall protection is not required. The employer must also establish and enforce a strict work rule that prevents employees from entering the area within 15 feet of the edge unless they are using the appropriate fall-protection measures described previously.



Footnotes

1. Tasks performed or repeated on a daily, routine or regular basis are not infrequent activities within the meaning of the final rule. Infrequent jobs also do not include those that workers perform as a primary or routine part of their job or repeatedly at various locations during a work shift. A task may be considered infrequent when it is performed once a month, once a year, or when needed. 81 Fed. Reg. 82513 (November 18, 2016)
2. *Temporary means that the duration of the task the worker performs is brief or short. Temporary and brief or short tasks generally include those that a worker is able to perform in less time than it takes to install or set up conventional fall protection...also include those that workers are able to complete at one time rather than repeatedly climbing up or returning to the roof or requiring more than one workshift to complete...short duration tasks generally are those that take less than '1-2 hours' to complete. 81 Fed. Reg. 82513 (November 18, 2016)*

How to Contact HIOSH

Under the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health Law, **employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees.**

HIOSH's mission is to assure Hawai'i's workers have safe and healthful working conditions free from unlawful retaliation.

HIOSH carries out its mission by setting and enforcing standards; enforcing anti-retaliation provisions of the HIOSH Law; providing and supporting training, outreach, education, and assistance.

For more information, call HIOSH at **(808) 586-9100** or visit www.labor.hawaii.gov/hiosh.



This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting HIOSH programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of HIOSH standards or regulations, refer to Title 12, Subtitle 8 of the Hawai'i Administrative Rules.

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

