

Fall Protection

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Many serious and fatal injuries are caused by falls. Everyone working on construction jobs must be alert to the hazards that can cause falls. If hazards are discovered, they should be reported to the supervisor and immediate action should be taken to eliminate them.

The following are the hazards that cause the majority of falls in the construction industry. Let's look at the ways to prevent or eliminate these hazards.

Slippery areas, debris, lumber, and various hard materials and equipment scattered over the floor and construction site can cause serious falls. Proper housekeeping can eliminate these hazards and reduce falls caused by slipping, tripping and stumbling. Slippery floors caused by oil or grease spills or ice should be cleaned up immediately. Tools should be stored in a box or rack when not in use. Scrap and debris should be placed in a scrap container.

Stairways and stairwells can also be serious hazards. Temporary handrails and barricade rails should always be placed on stairs and stairwells. Failure to use the handrail can result in a serious fall from the top to the bottom of the stairway. When going down stairs, keep your hand on the handrail so you can grasp it quickly to prevent a fall.

Worn or broken treads on stairs are also slipping hazards. Replace any defective treads. Never place or store materials or tools on stairways.

Floor openings and pits should always be barricaded or covered with planking that is securely fastened in place. Ladder rails and rungs must always be of the proper design, material and size. Ladders should never be used if the rails are cracked or the rungs are missing or broken. Ladders leading to landings or walkways should extend at least 36 inches above the landing and should be securely fastened. Long ladders must be braced at intermediate points; improper placement of the ladder can result in a sudden shift, which could cause a fall. The proper slope of a ladder is essential for maximum safety. Ladders should always be placed properly. The base of the ladder should be set at a distance of one-fourth the height of the ladder away from the wall or structure. Always make sure the ladder is solidly set before climbing it. If necessary, lay it in place to avoid shifting.

Always use two hands when climbing a ladder. Carrying objects in one hand can cause a sudden fall. Place both hands on the side rails, or rungs, whichever is surest for you. Keep a tool line in your pocket for raising or lowering tools or small objects.

Ascending or descending a ladder backward is a sure way to head for trouble. Always face the ladder when climbing, descending or working on it. Steel scaffolding should be erected and used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Proper seating and locking of all connections and using the correct devices are extremely important. All scaffolding must conform to the safety code design and be in strict compliance with material specifications and bracing. Where required, steel or wood scaffolds that are more than 4 feet high shall have toe boards and guardrail.

Many serious falls can occur while hurrying, "walk, do not run". Management can do everything possible to provide safe working conditions. But we need your help. Report any unsafe condition you discover immediately and follow the helpful suggestions we have discussed.

Other Topics if Necessary

If falls have occurred recently in your area, be prepared to discuss the accidents with your employees. Listen to their ideas; they may have the answer you have been looking for. Also, mention any hazards that may be peculiar to your particular operation.

GENERAL SAFETY REVIEW

This is a time to review all safety concerns, not just today's topic. Keep your notes on this page before, during and after the safety meeting.

Are you aware of any safety hazards from any other crews? Point out any hazards other crews are creating that this crew should know about. Tell the crew what you intend to do about those hazards.

Do we have any other safety business? Discuss any past issues or problems. Report any progress of investigations and action taken.

Have there been any accidents, near misses or complaints? Discuss any accidents, near misses, and complaints that have happened since the last safety meeting. Also recognize the safety contributions made by members of the crew.

Please remember, we want to hear from you about any health and safety issues that come up. If we don't know about problems, we can't take action to fix them.

ENDING THE MEETING

Circulate Sign-Off Form.

Assign one or more crew member(s) to help with next safety meeting.

Refer action items for follow-up.

Do you have any Safety Recommendations?

Do you have any Job Specific Topics you would like us to discuss?

Comments
