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Compensation Insurance and workplace safety



THINKING ABOUT FALL HAZARDS BEFORE THE WORK BEGINS

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Association Coordinator

Falls from ladders and roofs still account for the majority of falls. Identifying fall hazards and deciding how best to protect workers is the first step in reducing or eliminating fall hazards. Occupational fatalities caused by falls remain a serious public health problem. The US Department of Labor (DOL) lists falls as one of the leading causes of traumatic occupational death, accounting for eight percent of all occupational fatalities from trauma.

There are a number of ways to protect workers from falls including conventional systems such as guardrail systems, safety net systems and personal fall protection systems (fall arrest systems, positioning systems and travel restraint systems) as well as through the use of safe work practices and training. The use of warning lines, designated areas, control zones and similar systems are permitted by OSHA in some situations and can provide protection by limiting the number of workers exposed and instituting safe work methods and procedures. These alternative systems may be more appropriate than conventional fall protection systems when performing certain activities.

Any time a worker is at a height of four feet or more, the worker is at risk and needs to be protected. Fall protection must be provided at four feet in general industry, and six feet in construction. However, regardless of the fall distance, fall protection must be provided when working over dangerous equipment and machinery.

If personal fall protection systems are used, particular attention should be given to identifying attachment points and to ensuring that employees know how to properly use and inspect the equipment.

Assessing the job site for fall hazards before work begins is the first step in Fall Protection.

If you would like more information on workplace safety please contact your Association Coordinator.

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