

## Toolbox Talk

### Fall Protection - 1926.500

Falls are among the leading causes of injuries and fatalities in the construction industry. OSHA estimates that on average 202,066 work days are lost every year for workers recovering from fall related injuries. This represents a wide range of work, and falls include slips on the same level up to falls from a height. A BLS statistic from 2020 shows that 805 fatalities were the result of a fall at work, most commonly falls to a lower level.

There are countless events on a construction site that have a potential fall hazard. The goal for employers and workers is to minimize the danger with proper planning, and the authority to stop the work and correct as needed.

#### The Basic Fact of the Rule

On Walking and Working surfaces, when there is more than 6 feet to a lower level, Fall Protection Systems must be used.

#### *What are Fall Protection Systems?*

- Guard Rail – a barrier with a toe board, mid rail, and top rail 39-45” tall. Capable of supporting 200 lbs of force.
- Safety Net – Netting installing in the opening to catch a falling object/person. Must be capable of supporting 5,000 lbs.
- Personal Fall Arrest System – A body harness, lanyard, and anchor point to catch a person as they fall from a higher level. Anchor must support 5,000 lbs per person.
- Positioning Device – A body harness, lanyard, positioning device and anchor point. Designed to stop a person before they fall off the edge, or no more than 2’ of fall. Anchor must support 3,000 lbs.
- Warning Line – A physical rope/line installed no more than 6 ft from the open edge. No workers are allowed between the edge and line, line must be sturdy enough to feel pressure against the person to alert them of the edge.
- Controlled Access Zone – Keep unnecessary people out of the hazard. Barricades, warnings, and strict enforcement.
- Safety Monitor System – Only applies to leading edge work, where workers have to be at the edge of the fall to progress the construction. Safety Monitor is a designated person on the same working level and can only have one job, to watch and stop the workers.
- Covers – Any hole larger than 2” needs to be protected. Use a material strong enough to support twice the potential load, secure in place, and mark “Hole” or “Cover”

### *How to Pick Anchor Points*

A *Qualified* person has to determine the anchor point for Fall Protection equipment. This may be a structural engineer, the truss designer, or architect that can calculate the load points of building elements.

A *Competent* person, is the person in charge of installing the equipment to the *Qualified* person's direction. The *Competent* person also has the training and authority to recognize a hazard on site and make corrective actions.

### **Training**

You are only as good as your weakest element. All of the prep and equipment mean nothing if the people using them don't know what they are doing. Employee training is a requirement for Fall Protection. All employees must be trained on the company's equipment and the common and potential fall hazards associated with their job duties. Any change to the workers job duties, equipment, or worksite requires retraining. It is the employer's duty to provide fall protection, this includes the workers understanding of the hazards.

### *Questions for you*

1. What tasks do you perform at work that are more than 6' off the ground?
2. Do you have a company training policy for Fall Protection?
3. Who are your Qualified and Competent people?