

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



General Fall Awareness

Date: May 3-7, 2021

Falls are the leading cause of injuries at work sites. Falls can occur from ladders, scaffolding, heavy equipment, aerial lifts, openings, platforms, and roofs. From an elevation or on the same level. Between 2011 and 2018, the annual number of fall fatalities in construction increased by 36%, exceeding the growth in employment and total fatalities in this industry. More than half (55%) of fall fatalities in construction occurred at a height of 20 feet or less. Falls from roofs comprised one-third of fall deaths, followed by falls from ladders (24%).

What you need to know:

- Be aware of the fall trigger heights as it may be different depending on the state you are working in or the contractor you are working for. Fall protection is a system- not a one size fits all. Your job is to identify where there is a fall hazard and contact your Safety Representative if there are questions on the controls in place or if you are unsure about what they are. Guardrails, Personal Fall Arrest Systems or Safety Net Systems are some examples that may be set up as part of that system.
- Guardrails must be 42” in height, a mid-rail is required as well as toe-boards. When a guardrail system is utilized for Fall Protection it must, at a minimum, be comprised of a top rail, mid-rail, and toe-board and must be able to support 200 pounds lateral force.
- Personal Fall Protection Systems used for fall arrest must consist of a body harness, lanyard, and an anchor point that is capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds per employee. If you think it could support your ½ ton truck you’re probably ok.
- Be mindful of where your attachment point is. A 6 ft. shock absorbing lanyard worn by a 6ft. person with a harness, would need close to 18 ft. of clearance from its anchor point to avoid hitting the ground if the person were to fall.

Discussion point: What’s wrong with this picture?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. PPE (aka your harness/lanyard/yoyo) is the _____ line of defense after Engineering controls like guardrails.