

COMPLIANCE WITH OSHA STANDARDS

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) engages how various tasks and industries approach the risks associated with falls. Generally, workers get exposed to a fall hazard of six feet or more, and they need an optimum security for fall protection.

Before we dive into the details of OSHA's standards, let's start with the basics. When it comes to fall protection and prevention, there is one simple rule that every professional should keep in mind: Fall hazards must be assessed and addressed before employees perform any task that could result in a fall from heights.

According to OSHA's standard fall protection requirements, the general industry is required to offer protection services to its employers if the height surpasses 4fts. And for the construction company, an employer is required to offer protection services if the height surpasses 6fts.

The No Minimum Height Rule OSHA's No Minimum Height Rule is a specific exception to the general industry standard for fall protection. This rule states that employers are required to provide fall protection systems when employees are working at heights below the basic requirements where a fall would result in serious injury or death. So, what does this mean?

It means that even if an employee is working at ground level, fall protection should be provided if he or she could suffer serious injury from falling onto something like sharp tools or rebar.



AT WHAT HEIGHT IS FALL PROTECTION REQUIRED?

It is important to adhere to OSHA's safety requirements for fall protection, as falls are one of the leading causes of death in the workplace.

Necessary Provisions Requirements

For an employee to be considered properly protected from falls, the employer must adhere to OSHA's Necessary Provisions Requirements. These requirements state that employees must have access to fall protection systems whenever they are working in areas where a fall hazard exists. And, importantly, these systems must be used when necessary and inspected regularly for proper use and function.

Fall Protection

In general industry, OSHA requires employers to protect workers from falling hazards. This includes floor holes whose drop exceeds four feet and open-sided platforms that workers may walk around. Employers may use guard railings or toe boards to keep employees safe. If a worker can fall more than 4 feet, a fall protection system is required.

Facilities that do not meet the minimal standard for worker heights of four feet and above are subject to the fall protection standard. Personal fall protection equipment such as harnesses and lanyards may protect against injury or death by preventing falls altogether. Other fall protection methods include safety nets, railing systems, and stair railings. OSHA requires that fall protection measures be in place when working at heights of six feet or more. This equipment has to be compatible with the type of work being conducted. If a worker is using a powered platform, man lift, or vehicle-mounted work platform, they must have personal fall arrest equipment (PFAS) on at all times.

What does 100% tie off mean?

100% tie-off (protection from falls at all times, even when moving from point to point) must be provided while using personal fall protection. Sometimes this may require using two lanyards..

Ladders

The standards are different for portable and fixed ladders. In most cases, portable ladders do not need fall protection, but fixed ladders more than 20 feet in length must be equipped with a cage or safety net to prevent falls.

However, industrial ladders over 20 feet in unbroken length cannot be equipped with any safety device other than a cage. Friction brakes and sliding attachments are not permitted.

Facility Maintenance

Employers who comply with OSHA regulations have a lower rate of accidents and incidents. These employers can also improve their workplace environment greatly. Keeping facility floors clean and, to the extent possible, dry condition helps prevent workers from slipping and falling. Workers should be able to move around any facility safely without being hindered by tools, materials, debris, or spilled liquids.

Training

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has several regulations that apply to fall protection, including the general duty clause, fall protection standards for construction and general industry, and housekeeping requirements. Employers must train workers on hazards related to falls from heights, how to use personal fall arrest systems such as harnesses and lanyards correctly, and how to develop and implement a written fall protection plan.

