



Weekly Safety Meeting

Fatal 4: Falls

OSHA identifies the “fatal four” as the leading causes of death in the construction industry. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2022, 38.4% of deaths in this industry were due to slips, trips, and falls, accounting for about half of fall-related deaths in the U.S. that year. Falls from a higher to a lower level accounted for most of these deaths in the construction industry.

OSHA offers a series of Fact Sheets on Fall Protection, including specific areas of residential construction work. OSHA’s “Fall Protection: Reducing Falls during Residential Construction” Series includes handouts with detailed PPE advice and OSHA standards pertaining to the following topics:

- [Erecting Exterior and Interior Walls;](#)
- [Floor Joist Installation and Decking;](#)
- [Installing Roof Trusses;](#)
- [Installing Seam Metal Roofs;](#)
- [Installing Tile Roofs;](#)
- [Re-Roofing;](#)
- [Roof Repair;](#)
- [Roof Sheathing;](#) and
- [Working in Attics.](#)

General Fall Protection Safety Tips

Some general guidelines to prevent falls are the following:

- If you are working at 6 feet or more, use fall protection.
- Have a fall prevention plan in place before starting a job.
- Provide workers with the proper equipment for the job.
- Make sure work platforms are stable.
- Inspect your harness, lanyard, and anchorage point (equipment) before each use.
- Train everyone to use equipment safely.

Hierarchy of Controls

Also remember the hierarchy of controls when it comes to safety around fall hazards.

Elimination is the first action level and is the most effective way of dealing with a hazard such as a fall. Because of the nature of construction work, it is hard to totally eliminate fall hazards. If a piece of a building (window frame, etc.) can be constructed on the ground, instead of up high, a fall hazard

risk during construction can be eliminated until that point where the piece is hoisted up to be installed.

Substitution is the second level of the hierarchy of controls, and it involves switching out a process or a material for a less dangerous one. For fall prevention, this may mean using a crane or hoist at the ground level instead of a pulley system operated by workers at the roof level.

Engineering Controls are the third most effective type of preventative measure when it comes to safety. This kind of control prevents workers from coming in contact with known dangers. For example, if there is a hole for a skylight, bars or steel mesh might be secured in place over the empty space to prevent a fall hazard.

Administrative Controls are the fourth most effective safety measure in the hierarchy of controls. These controls change the way work is done by providing workers with procedures, training, and warnings to avoid hazards. For example, warning tape must be placed 6 feet from an unprotected edge for roofing work. This tape is a visual cue to workers that they are approaching a dangerous area. Combined with training and other administrative controls such as warning lines, this is the second-to-last line of defense against the fall hazard.

Personal protective equipment is the last line of defense against hazards on the hierarchy of controls and includes clothing and devices to protect workers. PPE can be more effective when used in combination with other controls. PPE for fall protection includes travel restraint and positioning systems, safety harnesses, and fall arrest systems.

Falls from Height

Falls from height continues to cause the most fatalities in the construction industry year after year. Employers should make sure they train employees properly, use fall prevention controls in work areas at height, and provide the proper equipment to workers on the job.

HAVE FALL PROTECTION IN PLACE...JUST IN CASE!

