



FP Safety Series: Workplace Falls Remain Most Common Safety Concern

Insights

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Every year, OSHA releases a list of its Top 10 Most Cited Workplace Safety Standards – but many employers are not aware of this list, which can be of great assistance in eliminating the most dangerous workplace situations. To address this problem, we will be providing focused Insights over the course of 2023 discussing the most common workplace safety violations and some other workplace safety areas that frequently require employer attention. And of course, we'll offer tips to help you create a safer workplace. This month, we'll start with the most frequently cited workplace safety standard: fall protection.

Fall Protection Snapshot

Notably, Fall Protection is notorious for being the most cited workplace safety standard. This past year marked Fall Protection's 12th straight year at the top of OSHA's Top 10 list, with over 5,900 cited violations.

Whether an employee works at heights on a daily basis or just occasionally, safe fall protection practices are critical to ensuring employee safety. When dealing with work performed off of the ground, all it takes is one mistake to turn a routine task into a serious injury or fatality. Fall protection violations can include improper use of ladders, improper guarding, holes in floors, tripping hazards, and employees working without fall protection.

What Can Employers Do?

Here are seven quick and easy tips to consider when dealing with fall protection:

- Ensure that employees identify any potential tripping and fall hazards, such as unprotected floor openings, lack of railings, edges, skylights, and stairwells before work starts.
- Ensure employees are aware of how to correct fall hazards in their working environment, and who they should contact if they see a potential risk.
- Employees need to know how to select, wear, inspect, and use appropriate fall protection. In addition, if tasks will require extended worker mobility or will place them near the fall hazard, a personal fall arrest system (PFAS) must be used. This is especially important when your workers

will have to climb up or down ladders, or when they are working near unprotected sides and edges.

- Provide consistent training – if you want your employees to work safely at heights, you must properly train them.
- Be aware of the specific situations in which fall protection is required, and ensure that you are providing the appropriate equipment and training to their employees. This means taking into account the manner in which a particular job will be completed, the various tasks involved that need to be completed, and the safety equipment required to complete each task.
- Before a job is started, make sure you have a written fall protection plan in place that outlines the specific measures to be taken to prevent falls.
- Regularly inspect fall protection equipment to ensure that it is in good condition and functioning properly.

Conclusion

Working safely at heights doesn't happen by luck. It requires education, preparation, and consistent implementation. The more you can instill these principles into your employees, the safer they will be.

If you have any questions about compliance, contact the author of this insight, any member of the [Workplace Safety Practice Group](#), or your Fisher Phillips attorney for guidance. Make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight System](#) to get the most up-to-date information on workplace safety issues.

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