OSHA Safety Training
Fall Protection

It is important that safety and health programs contain provisions to protect workers from falls on the job. The following hazards cause the most fall-related injuries:

1. Unprotected Sides, Wall Openings, and Floor Holes

2. Improper Scaffold Construction

   • Construct all scaffolds according to the manufacturer's instructions.
   • Install guardrail systems along all open sides and ends of platforms.
   • Use at least one of the following for scaffolds more than 10 feet above a lower level:
     o Guardrail Systems
     o Personal Fall Arrest Systems
   • Provide safe access to scaffold platforms
   • Do not use climb cross-bracing as a means of access.

3. Unguarded Protruding Steel Rebars

   • Guard all protruding ends of steel rebar with rebar caps or wooden troughs, or
   • Bend rebar so exposed ends are no longer upright.
   • When employees are working at any height above exposed rebar, fall protection/prevention is the first line of defense against impalement.

4. Misuse of Portable Ladders

   You risk falling if portable ladders are not safely positioned each time they are used.
When Should Fall Protection Be Provided?

- Where there is a walking or working surface that has one or more unprotected edges
- When a worker is building a leading edge
- When there is a danger that a worker could fall through a hole in a walking or working surface
- When an employee is working on the face of formwork or reinforcing steel
- On ramps, runways, or other walkways
- At the edge of an excavation, hole, well, pit, or shaft
- When employees are working above dangerous equipment (even if it is less than six feet above such equipment)!
- When a worker is doing overhand bricklaying or related masonry work
- When an employee is working on a roof
- When a worker is doing precast construction erection (with some exceptions)
- During certain types of residential construction.

The following have been determined to be contributing factors in many fall-through accidents:

- Inadequate safety programs and worker training
- Failure to identify and eliminate fall hazards or to provide an adequate fall prevention system
- Removal of hole covers by workers
- Failure to protect workers from fall hazards during bad weather conditions
- Inappropriate task assignments for young workers
- Lack of written agreements between general contractors and subcontractors to clearly describe how safety responsibilities will be handled and how workers will be protected from hazards at the worksite

The four most common types of fall-prevention equipment are:

- Personal Fall Arrest System (PFAS)
- Guardrail or Railing Systems
- Safety Net Systems
- Covers