

Jason Mechanical Corp

Tool Box Safety Talk

Fall Protection

Mention "Fall Protection" and one can easily conjure up images of workers bravely risking life and limb 20 feet, 30 feet or higher above solid ground -- their safety guaranteed only by a few buckles, a lanyard and body harness. Of course, the above does not reflect the realities of fall protection. Fall hazards may exist at any given workplace. In fact, falls are the leading hazard at the workplace.

A properly implemented fall protection program limits the risk of falling from heights by providing appropriate training in recognizing fall hazards and the use of fall protection systems and equipment.

Note: Federal and State OSHA Fall Protection standards determine the height at which fall protection is required and it varies by industry. Be aware of the proper standard that applies to your employees and ensure they are trained accordingly. This safety meeting does not replace formal fall protection training.

Because all workplaces are not the same and working conditions vary, OSHA has provisions within their standards allowing employers to create a Fall Protection Plan for a specific site. This plan would then become part of our Fall Protection Program. It is important to note that a Fall Protection Plan can only be used when the conventional systems provided within our program (guardrail systems; personal fall arrest systems; safety net systems; positioning device systems; warning line systems; controlled access zones; and safety monitoring systems) are not feasible.

Fall protection also concerns the falling of objects from any height. The mandatory wearing of hard hats, toeboards on scaffolds, and controlled access zones aid in the protection of workers where falling objects present a potential hazard.

It is interesting to note that fall protection standards do not apply directly to ladders and scaffolds. Scaffolds and ladders have their own safety requirements which, when followed, prevent falls.

You must be aware that on multi-employer work sites, fall hazards (primarily falling objects) may be created by other employers. Stay out of controlled access zones and wear a hard hat at all times. Understand that when working at heights, a fall protection system must be used.

Safety equipment such as harnesses, ropes, and lanyards used as personal fall protection devices must be used for no other purpose, such as lifting materials. It should be noted that effective January 1, 1998, body belts are not acceptable as part of a personal fall arrest system. However, they are acceptable as part of a positioning device system.

Falls from heights can result in very serious injury. Be aware of fall hazards and never work without fall protection if a fall hazard exists.

