



MONTANA MUNICIPAL INTERLOCAL AUTHORITY

FALL PROTECTION QUICK GUIDE

PO Box 6669 Helena, MT 59604-6669 | (800) 635-3089 | www.mmia.net

There are many regulations when it comes to protecting employees while performing work from heights. The type of tasks being completed determine the different regulations that need to be followed to protect your employees. The following information covers [29 CFR 1910 Subpart D - Walking Working Surfaces](#) for general industry fall protection requirements. For construction industry requirements, refer to [29 CFR 1926 Subpart M Fall Protection](#).

General Industry Requirements:

- The employer must ensure that each employee on a walking-working surface with an unprotected side or edge that is 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level is protected from falling by one or more of the following: guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall protection systems.
- Fall protection around all unprotected sides and edges of platforms or elevated work surfaces from any height must be provided when working above dangerous machinery or equipment unless the equipment is covered or guarded to eliminate the hazard.
- Employees must be protected against falling through holes in floors, walls, hatches, chutes, or other openings greater than 4 feet (1.2 m) above the lower level or where dangerous equipment or machinery is below.

The list of factors taken into consideration while performing work from heights is ever changing but starting with these basic steps can help in the prevention of falls.

Step 1. Analyze tasks and working areas for fall hazards prior to the start of any work.

- Before work begins, analyze the work area and surrounding areas for fall hazards, identifying fall hazards associated with each task to be completed on site.
- Review blueprints, plans, and procedures for any foreseeable fall hazards.
- Anticipate how fall hazards may change during the course of work.
- Develop a job safety analysis to record all fall hazards and protective measures.
- Discuss identified hazards with supervisors and employees.
- Communicate hazards to all parties on site, including contractors.
- Continue to analyze the working area for changing conditions and emerging fall hazards as work is completed.
- Work with supervisors and front-line employees in further identifying and analyzing fall hazards before work begins.
- If job or task poses serious harm and hazards cannot be mitigated, consider contracting the work to a vendor.



Step 2. Mitigate fall hazards

- After the work site has been analyzed and the hazards have been identified, implement mitigation strategies (see next section for details) to eliminate or reduce identified fall hazards.
- Whenever possible eliminate the identified fall hazards. If the hazards cannot be eliminated, implement other controls, such as engineering or administrative controls, to eliminate or reduce the exposure of fall hazards.
- All known and identified hazards should be mitigated or reduced to the furthest extent before any work begins.
- Prioritize fall hazards and follow all plans and procedures that have been implemented to eliminate or reduce fall hazards.
- Employees must be trained on the hazards and protective measures prior to performing work from heights.

Mitigation Strategies

- Eliminate: To eliminate the need for fall protection measures, when reasonably practical, design systems or work processes to eliminate exposure to the fall hazard. Eliminating the hazard is the highest level of protection.
 - Evaluate and determine if a change in the procedure, practice, location, or equipment will eliminate exposure to the fall hazard.
 - o Specifying equipment be located on the ground or in an enclosed room on the roof rather than by the edge of the roof are examples of hazard elimination.
 - Utilize equipment and tools that promote ground level working methods when designing new operations.



MONTANA MUNICIPAL INTERLOCAL AUTHORITY

FALL PROTECTION QUICK GUIDE

PO Box 6669 Helena, MT 59604-6669 | (800) 635-3089 | www.mmia.net

- Substitution: Whenever the fall hazard cannot be eliminated, the next best protection is substituting processes, or making changes to tasks or procedures to help eliminate or reduce the exposure to fall hazards and the need for fall protection measures.
 - Separate tasks that can be completed at ground level.
 - Implement procedural changes such as completing pre-fabrication on the ground or bringing the equipment down to ground level for work to be completed (when feasible).
- Engineering Controls: If elimination or substitution are feasible, implementing engineering controls to reduce exposures to prevent falls while working at heights is the next level of protection. Engineering controls assist in the prevention of falls but do not eliminate the fall hazard like elimination or substitution controls.
 - Implement engineering controls such:
 - guardrails or parapet walls with top rails/top of wall 42 inches above the walking/working level,
 - safety nets installed as a barrier to prevent a fall or beneath the work to catch a falling worker,
 - fall restraint systems that restrict the workers' range of movement so they cannot physically travel to the fall hazard, or other controls such as mechanical and non-mechanical platforms, anchor/tie off points, boom mounted machinery, specialized tools, hoists, or use of mobile equipment.
- Administrative Controls: Administrative controls are work practices or procedures that increase a worker's awareness of a fall hazard. Administrative controls are one of the least preferred methods of protection because they do not provide a physical means of protection.
 - Utilize methods such safety monitors, warning lines, warning horns, designated working areas, control lines, signage or flagging to alert workers to fall hazards.
 - May be used in conjunction with Personal Protective Equipment.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): PPE is the least preferred protection measure for mitigating hazards as its designed to protect the employee once they have contact with the hazard; not to prevent the hazard from existing. Although not the first line of defense, PPE is still an integral part of protecting your employees from falls.
 - Utilize fall arrest systems that may include safety harnesses, lanyards, and positioning devices.
 - Utilize PPE in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
 - All employees have the right to be provided with the proper PPE, and trained in the proper donning, doffing and use of PPE.



Member owned. Member driven.

We are you.