

## Falls (Construction Industry) Safety Talk

Falls from heights is one of the leading causes for injuries and fatalities in the workplace and in the home. In the construction industry they are the leading cause of fatalities. Falls accounted for 359 out of 899 total deaths in construction in 2014. The standards set by OSHA for protecting workers from falls in the construction industry are some of the most commonly violated standards in the workplace. More work needs to be done by employers to ensure workers are protected while working at heights.

### Fall Prevention

OSHA uses a “plan, provide, and train” model in their fall prevention campaign that is a straightforward way to prevent falls in the workplace.

1. Plan- Plan work tasks ahead of time. Planning work tasks is especially important for high hazard tasks such as working at heights. First look at eliminating any work at heights if possible. If elimination is not possible then plan what you will need for performing the work at heights. Plan out what equipment, tools, personnel, and materials you will need. After looking at these items, look at what safety equipment, PPE, and training will be needed to safely complete the task.
2. Provide- Provide all necessary safety equipment and PPE when the work height exceeds six foot and engineering controls such as guardrails are not in place. Outside of equipment and PPE, provide the employees with the proper amount of time it takes to setup the job as well complete the work.
3. Train- Properly train employees to not only know how to use the safety equipment that is provided but also in hazard recognition. It is important that the employees are able to recognize hazards and understand how to properly address them before starting or continuing work. Train employees to first think about how to eliminate dangerous work tasks or the hazards that accompany working at heights.

### Summary

Compliance with OSHA standards should only be the start of working at heights safely. Following a well thought out plan, providing all the necessary resources, and training employees can help to prevent injuries and fatalities due to falls.

### Discussion point:

-What are ways we can eliminate hazards during our work tasks that require working at heights?