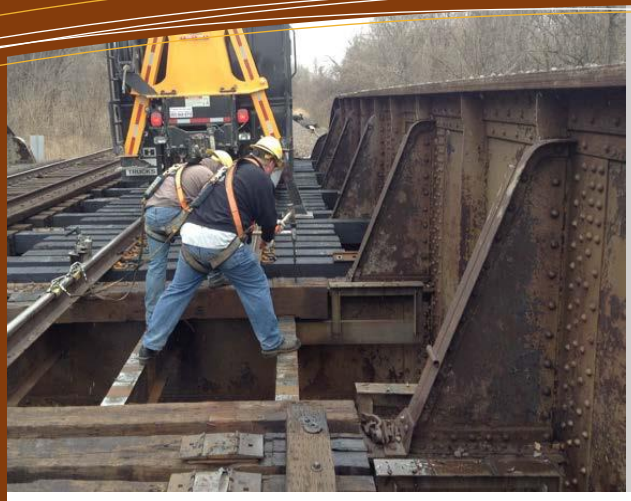
OSHA National Safety Stand-Down

To Prevent Falls in Construction - Railroad Edition



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Falls are among the most common causes of injuries and deaths in the workplace, totaling an estimated 100,000 each year. They are in fact the reason for more than half of all the on-the-job deaths among construction workers — and 15 percent of all occupational deaths.

Despite the increasing sales of fall protection products, the number of fall-related injuries continues to grow. Why? The lack of proper training is one reason. Others are the selection of the wrong equipment for a particular application and the failure of a user to use the equipment properly.

Safety stand-downs are a common method used to educate workers about specific risks in which more focus and better communication may be needed.

Some Tips On Hosting a Safety Stand-down

- Appoint a coordinator to plan, organize, and manage your safety stand-down. OSHA has plenty of information that can help make your safety stand-down a success.
- Pick a good time throughout the day to host the event. Stay away from lunchtime or break time. You want to make this special so give the event its own time slot.
- Promote your safety stand-down. You want workers to take the safety stand-down seriously and join the conversation. Promoting your safety stand-down in a unique way provides the best chance to achieve that.
- Hold the meeting in an inviting place so you can talk freely with workers.
- Review existing safety procedures, rules, and guidelines. It doesn't hurt to go over the basics no matter how many times you've done so before.
- Choose topics related to safety incidences or near-misses that have occured. Take suggestions from your workforce on future topics and encourage feedback. Include open discussions as part of the safety stand-down if possible.
- Implement as many of the workers' suggestions as you can. They're in the trenches when it comes to job site safety so they'll have practical insights to share.
- Continue to emphasize safety once the stand-down is over. In fact, you should be encouraging safety throughout the year.

Plan Ahead

Simply having a fall protection system is not where safety ends. It is imperative that all employees are made aware of a rescue & retrieval plan. This set of procedures will help everyone understand the risks that are involved when a worker is suspended in a harness.

If a worker has become suspended in a harness and is still conscious, having something to stand on is helpful because it will allow them to use their leg muscles by pushing against it. Doing this keeps the blood circulating back to the torso. It is not recommended that they move their legs in midair. Although this would keep blood moving from legs to the torso, but eventually if the person tires the legs will begin to pool the blood.

After rescue when someone has been suspended for a long period they should sit in the "W" position for at least 30 minutes. This position is where the worker sits upright on the ground with their back straight and their legs bent keeping their knees in line with their chin. By sitting this way they are allowing the pooled blood to flow from the legs and slowly be re-introduced back into the body and prevents reflow syndrome. This better helps your body filter the pooled blood.

Three Point Contact Considerations

Falling while getting into or out of truck cabs, heavy equipment, or when mounting or dismounting truck bodies or trailers can cause serious injuries. Many knee, ankle and back injuries result from jumping off equipment onto uneven ground or objects.

The biggest cause of falls from a vehicle is human error and failure to follow the "Three Point Rule". The Three Point Rule requires three of four points of contact to be maintained with the vehicle at all times – two hands and one foot, or both feet and one hand. This system allows maximum stability and support which reduces the likelihood of slipping and falling.

There are important steps that can be taken to prevent mounting/dismounting injuries with use of the Three Point Rule being the most important.

What the Employer can do:

- Evaluate every truck and piece of equipment.
  Provide additional steps, non-slip surfaces and hand holds where necessary.
- Maintain steps, contact surfaces and handholds in useable condition.
  Inspect frequently.
- Instruct all workers in safely mounting and dismounting equipment, including the 3-point contact method.
- Install warning decals or signs in the cab or on the door of
- reminding workers to use 3-point contact.

What the Employee can do:

- Keep steps, ladders and standing surfaces free of snow, mud and debris.
  Report damage immediately.
- Don't use tires or wheel hubs as a step surface.
- Don't use the doorframe or door edge as a handhold.
- Wear footwear with good support and slip resistance.
- Don't climb down with something in your hand. Leave it the vehicle and retrieve it after getting safely on the ground.
- Don't rush to climb out; descend slowly to avoid straining a muscle.
- Be extra careful when working in inclement weather.
- Exit and enter facing the cab.
- Get a firm grip on rails or handles.
- Never Jump! You may land on an uneven surface, off balance or on something. Look before exiting.

Basic Ladder Safety

If you feel tired or dizzy, or are prone to losing your balance, stay off the ladder.

Do not use ladders in high winds or storms.

Wear clean slip-resistant shoes. Shoes with leather soles are not appropriate for ladder use since they are not considered sufficiently slip resistant.

Before using a ladder,inspect it to confirm it is in good working condition.

Ladders with loose or missing parts must be rejected. Rickety ladders that sway or lean to the side must be rejected.

The ladder you select must be the right size for the job.

The Duty Rating of the ladder must be greater than the total weight of the climber,tools,supplies,and other objects placed upon the ladder. The length of the ladder must be sufficient so that the climber does not have to stand on the top rung or step.

Inspecting a fall protection system:

A fall protection system must be inspected regularly, meaning before each use. This is not just a cursory “onceover”. If it fails to pass inspection, immediately remove from service the faulty component or components. Follow these inspection instructions:

First, look for the equipment’s date of manufacture, indicated on the product label. Always check your manufacturer’s instructions. If the equipment meets the manufacturer’s instructions, begin to examine each component. Check for wear and deterioration. Look for evidence of impact loading. Visually inspect for loose threads, pulled rivets, burns, cuts, abrasions, or other evidence of chemical or physical deterioration that may have weakened the material or assembly.

Inspect all hardware including, but not limited to, hooks, buckles and D-rings. Look for any cracks or malfunction. Immediately remove from service all components that fail.

1. Stitching and webbing.

Check stitching for broken, burned, cut or pulled stitches. Broken strands of webbing appear as tufts on the webbing surface. To visually check for damage caused by corrosives, heat, chemicals and other conditions, hold the connecting device with your hands six to eight inches apart. Bend the webbing in an inverted “U” to cause surface tension and expose problem areas. Inspect the entire length. For deceleration units, check the stitching for broken, burned, cut or pulled stitches. Check the breakaway jacket for cuts, broken stitches, tears, stretch marks or other evidence of impact load.

2. Broken strands

Inspect rope lanyards for broken strands by twisting the rope slightly to undo the braiding. Inspect the entire lanyard in this manner. Discard lanyards with broken strands.

NOTE: Twisted rope such as nylon filament and polyplus rope used in lanyards is subject to a condition known as “hockling,” similar to the condition often seen in a telephone handset cord. Causes may be a repetitive twisting movement such as normal hand rotation in hooking and unhooking, a lanyard dangling freely, or using the lanyard to suspend equipment. Preventive measures include: 1) inspection and smoothing out after each use, 2) storing neatly, and 3) never using a lanyard for towing or hoisting. Some hockling is normal and is not a reason to discard a lanyard.

Basic Ladder Safety, Cont.

When the ladder is set-up for use, it must be placed on firm level ground and without any type of slippery condition present at either the base or top support points.

Only one person at a time is permitted on a ladder unless the ladder is specifically designed for more than one climber (such as a Trestle Ladder).

Ladders must not be placed in front of closed doors that can open toward the ladder. The door must be blocked open, locked, or guarded.

Read the safety information labels on the ladder.

The on-product safety information is specific to the particular type of ladder on which it appears. The climber is not considered qualified or adequately trained to use the ladder until familiar with this information.

3. Inspect all hooks, D-rings and all other metal parts.

Check hardware for sharp edges and cracks. Rollers must not be distorted and should roll freely. Check all parts, especially corners and attachment points, for wear and cracks.

4. Destroy and replace all worn or damaged equipment.

Never use it! Using this equipment may cause injury or death.

5. Remember, the inspector is the most important part of any inspection procedure.

The inspector must be well trained and understand what to look for. Our objective is not merely compliance. We must do our part to provide a safe work environment.

Certificate of Participation

Employers will be able to provide feedback about their Stand-Down and download a Certificate of Participation following the Stand-Down.

Share Your Story With Us

If you want to share information with OSHA on your Safety Stand-Down, Fall Prevention Programs or suggestions on how we can improve future initiatives like this, please send your email to oshastanddown@dol.gov. Also share your Stand-Down story on social media, with the hashtag: ***#StandDown4Safety***.