Fall protection toolbox talk

29 CFR 1926.501, 1926.502, 1926.503

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Where on this job could someone fall to a lower level today, and what is stopping them?

Why it matters

A fall from height can kill you or change your life for good, and it happens in a split second. Falls come from unsafe conditions, like an open edge or a loose cover, and from unsafe acts, like unhooking to reach one more spot. Protection only works if it is set up before the work starts and used every time.

Key points

1. **Know when protection is required**
   In construction, each worker on a surface with an unprotected side or edge 6 feet or more above a lower level must be protected from falling. The options are a guardrail system, a safety net system or a personal fall arrest system. Guardrails and covers protect everyone at once, so put those in first where you can.
   29 CFR 1926.501(b)(1)

2. **Secure and mark every hole cover**
   Holes in floors and roofs, including skylights, are easy to miss. Covers must be secured so wind, equipment or workers cannot knock them out of place, and they must be color coded or marked HOLE or COVER (29 CFR 1926.502(i)(4)). Never pull a cover unless that hole is protected another way.
   29 CFR 1926.502(i)(3)

3. **Inspect your harness before every use**
   Your personal fall arrest system is made up of an anchorage, connectors and a body harness, and it may include a lanyard, lifeline or deceleration device (29 CFR 1926.500(b)). It must be inspected before each use for wear, damage and other deterioration, and defective parts must be removed from service. Look for cut or frayed webbing, burn marks, and hooks that do not close and lock. Fall arrest stops you after you fall, while a restraint setup keeps you from reaching the edge at all.
   29 CFR 1926.502(d)(21)

ToolboxKits by ALC Media LLC. Not affiliated with OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. Not legal advice.

4 Tie off to an anchor that can hold you

Anchorages for personal fall arrest must support at least 5,000 pounds per employee attached, or be designed, installed and used as part of a complete system with a safety factor of at least two, under the supervision of a qualified person (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15)(i) and (ii)). Never tie off to a guardrail system (29 CFR 1926.502(d)(23)). If you are not sure an anchor is good, stop and ask before you clip in.

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15)

5 Plan the rescue before anyone ties off

A harness stops the fall, but someone still has to get you down fast. The employer must provide for prompt rescue of employees in the event of a fall, or make sure they can rescue themselves. Before work starts, know the rescue plan, where the rescue gear is and who calls for help.

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20)

6 Get trained and stay trained

Every worker who might be exposed to fall hazards must be trained to recognize them and in the procedures to follow to minimize them. You must be retrained when changes in the workplace or equipment make your training obsolete, or when you no longer have the understanding and skill to use the gear (29 CFR 1926.503(c)). If you have not been trained on the system you are using, say so before you go up.

29 CFR 1926.503(a)(1)

Scenario

Picture this: Your crew is framing the second floor of a building. A carpenter lifts a plywood cover off a floor opening to drop a cord through, then walks off to grab a tool. The cover is leaning against a wall, and a new laborer is walking backward across the deck, pulling a hose toward the opening. What should have happened before that cover came off, and who on this crew would speak up?

Crew discussion

1. Where are the open edges, holes and skylights on our job right now, and how is each one protected?
2. Can someone show us how to inspect a harness and lanyard, and what would make you take one out of service?
3. Which anchor points are we using, and how do we know they are strong enough?
4. If someone fell and was hanging in a harness, who would do what in the first few minutes?

Bottom line

Before you work near an edge or a hole, make sure the protection is in place, your gear is inspected and you know the rescue plan.

Free to share and adapt for non-commercial use under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0). Credit: ToolboxKits, toolboxkits.com/topics/fall-protection/

Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Fall protection / Protección contra caídas

Date / Fecha _____

Trainer / Instructor _____ Location / Lugar _____ Company / Empresa _____

#	Name Nombre	Signature Firma	Company Empresa	Date Fecha
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Trainer signature / Firma del instructor _____ Time / Hora _____

ToolboxKits by ALC Media LLC. Not affiliated with OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. Not legal advice.