Falling objects toolbox talk: dropped objects and overhead hazards

29 CFR 1926.501, 1926.502, 1926.759, 1926.451, 1926.1425, 1926.250

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

Look up. What is above you right now that could fall, and what would stop it if it did?

Why it matters

A tool, bolt or piece of scrap dropped from height can seriously hurt someone below, often with no warning. A drop can start with something small: a loose tool, material near an edge, or debris kicked off a platform. Hard hats help, but the real goal is to keep things from falling and keep people out from under the work.

Key points

1. **A hard hat alone is not enough**
   In construction, workers exposed to falling objects must wear hard hats, and the employer must also use one of three measures: toeboards, screens or guardrail systems; a canopy, with objects kept back from the edge; or a barricaded area that people stay out of, with objects kept back from the edge. General industry has a similar rule that requires head protection plus one or more of those measures (29 CFR 1910.28(c)).
   29 CFR 1926.501(c)

2. **Keep tools and materials back from the edge**
   Toeboards along an overhead edge help stop tools and small parts from being kicked off. Where tools, equipment or materials are piled higher than the toeboard, paneling or screening must be put up to protect the people below (29 CFR 1926.502(j)(4)). During roofing work, materials and equipment must not be stored within 6 feet of a roof edge unless guardrails are erected at the edge (29 CFR 1926.502(j)(7)(i)).
   29 CFR 1926.502(j)(7)(i)

3. **Secure your tools when you work at height**
   Use tool lanyards rated for the tool, tool bags or buckets that close, and hand lines to raise and lower gear. Never toss tools or materials up or down. In steel erection, all materials, equipment and tools that are not in use while aloft must be secured against accidental displacement (29 CFR 1926.759(a)). Check your pockets and your platform before you move so nothing loose rides along.
   29 CFR 1926.759(a)

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4 Scaffolds need falling object protection too

Besides wearing hard hats, workers on a scaffold must be protected from falling hand tools, debris and other small objects by toeboards, screens, guardrail systems, debris nets, catch platforms or canopy structures. When tools or materials could fall from a scaffold onto people below, one option is to barricade the area below and keep everyone out (29 CFR 1926.451(h)(2)(i)). Do not let debris build up on platforms (29 CFR 1926.451(f)(13)).

29 CFR 1926.451(h)(1)

5 Stay out from under the work

Respect barricades, warning lines and signs below overhead work. Never walk or stand under a suspended load. On crane work, while the operator is not moving a suspended load, no one may be in the fall zone except workers hooking, unhooking or guiding the load, making the initial attachment, or operating a concrete hopper or bucket (29 CFR 1926.1425(b)). If you must pass near overhead work, get the crew's attention first.

29 CFR 1926.1425(b)

6 Stack materials so they cannot fall

On construction sites, materials stored in tiers must be stacked, racked, blocked, interlocked or otherwise secured to prevent sliding, falling or collapse (29 CFR 1926.250(a)(1)). In warehouses and other general industry workplaces, bags, containers and bundles stored in tiers must be stacked, blocked, interlocked and limited in height so they are stable and secure against sliding or collapse (29 CFR 1910.176(b)). Check racks and stacks before you pull from them, and report anything leaning or damaged.

29 CFR 1926.250(a)(1)

Scenario

Picture this: A crew is setting decking two floors up. A worker sets a box of screws and a cordless drill near the edge of the deck while he adjusts his harness. Below, a laborer cuts through the area under the work, past a barricade that someone moved earlier. What could go wrong in the next minute, and what should each person do differently?

Crew discussion

1. What tools or materials are up high on this job today, and how are they secured?
2. Where are the barricaded areas below overhead work, and does everyone know to stay out?
3. What would you do if you saw a tool sitting near an open edge?
4. How do we warn people below before overhead work starts?

Bottom line **Secure what is up high, keep people out from under the work, and wear your hard hat every time.**

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema Falling and dropped objects / Objetos que caen

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Trainer / Instructor _____

Location / Lugar _____

Company / Empresa _____

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