



Safety Talk: Fall Protection



For the last several years, falls have been the leading cause of workplace fatalities in the U.S. Falls to a lower level account for 85-90% of fall-related fatalities.

Employees must work with heightened awareness when working from heights!

FALL PROTECTION POLICY

All University employees performing maintenance activities at a height of **4'** or more, or construction work at a height of **6'** or more above a lower level shall be protected from fall hazards and falling.

Types of Fall Protection

- **Guardrails** – physical barrier against drop
- **Controlled Access** – restrict access only to authorized workers
- **Monitoring System** – a competent person patrols work
- **Warning Line Systems** – barriers that warn when approaching an unprotected edge
- **Personal Fall Arrest Systems** – personal devices that prevent or control the rate of falls.

Fall Protection Requirements for Roofs:

- **Low-Sloped:**
 - Guardrails; or
 - Warning line system and personal fall arrest or monitoring system
- **Steep**
 - Guardrails; or
 - Personal fall arrest system
- **Certain roofs on campus have more specific requirements**

The Three Parts of the Fall Arrest System:

- **Anchor/anchorage connector**
- **Body harness**
- **Connecting device**
 - **Positioning lanyard** – holds a worker in place
 - **Suspension** – lowers or raises a worker
 - **Retrieval** – emergency removal of a worker from a confined space
 - **Fall Arrest Lanyard** – stops a worker from striking the lower level

Suspension Trauma:

Occurs when someone is suspended for too long and blood flow is restricted.

- Person must be removed from the fall arrest system within 5 minutes of the fall.
- **Discuss a rescue plan before starting the job!**

Regular Inspections Are Necessary Before Each Use:

- Webbing on the lanyard and body harness
- D-rings and eyelets
- Buckles
- Snaps, hooks, and locking mechanisms

When to Discard Fall Arrest Equipment:

1. Wears, tears, or frays in webbing on lanyards and body harnesses.
2. Oil, dirt, grease, or other chemicals on webbing.
3. Deformed or cracked D-rings or eyelets.
4. Buckles not securely closing.
5. Failing locking mechanisms.
6. Manufacturer's label is missing from harnesses or lanyards.

FALL PROTECTION TRAINING

Required for all employees that are exposed to fall hazards.

Additional hands-on training is also required for employees using fall arrest systems.

Training shall be arranged through Environmental Health and Safety.