Weekly Safety Meetings Select Edition
Safety Training for the Construction Industry

San Diego Services

APR WEEK 1

Fall Causes

When we think about falls many of us automatically envision falling from a great height. This kind of fall is, of course, very dangerous and most often fatal, and we need to take every precaution to prevent such an occurrence. Today however, our safety meeting will concentrate on the common, everyday hazards that cause slips, trips and falls on the jobsite. Let's review some of the circumstances that can cause falls and the measures you should be taking to reduce the number of slips, trips, and falls on this job.

Tripping hazards exist all over construction sites. You must be alert and keep safety in mind at all times. Start by watching where you're going, especially when you're carrying materials that obscure your forward vision. Additionally, don't create tripping hazards and eliminate any you find. Tripping over a misplaced hose can result in a lot of misery. Keep air and water hoses, welding leads, and welding hoses out of traffic areas. Never place extension cords in passageways; string them overhead and out of the way. Keep aisles, walkways, stairs, and work fabrication areas clean and clear. Pick up and dispose of scrap materials properly. Don't leave tools lying around where someone might stumble over them. Clean up water, grease, and oil spills promptly. Always guard floor holes and wall openings.

When using a ladder or getting on or off equipment remember to maintain three points of contact; two hands firmly gripping the side or handrails with one foot on the rung or step, or both feet on the rungs or steps and one hand on the rail. Avoid jumping off of a piece of equipment. Never use a chair or a box as a substitute for a ladder.

Weather also contributes to slips and falls. When placing a ladder after a rain or snowfall be sure you have a firm, solid footing. Rain, mud, frost, snow, and ice are particularly hazardous on walkways, stairs, ladder rungs, equipment steps and scaffolding; make sure they are clean and safe. A good pair of work boots will provide better traction in inclement weather, reducing the possibility of slipping. In cold weather, gloves offer both warmth and protection but keep in mind that your grip may not be quite as tight or secure when you reach for support.

Plain old common sense and good housekeeping are definitely factors that reduce falls, but your awareness and **your** recognition of safety hazards are the most important factors in preventing slips, trips and falls.

SAFETY REMINDER

No one is exempt from a slip, trip or fall.

Be alert and be safe.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

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APR WEEK 2

Ladders

Many types of ladders are available. There is no excuse for using the wrong one, a broken one, or even worse, a makeshift one. Whether you are using a stepladder, extension ladder, an a-frame ladder, or a job-built ladder you need to inspect the ladder carefully before use. Take the time to check the rungs and side rails to make sure they are not damaged. Look at the parts of extension ladders such as ropes, pulleys, guides, and locking dogs to ensure they are working properly. Non-slip safety feet should be in place. Check the surfaces of the ladder to make certain they are free of oil, grease, and other lubricants, especially ladder rungs.

Be sure to set up the ladder properly. Make sure your ladder is set up on firm, level ground. **Never** place the ladder on boxes, barrels, pallets, etc. Try not to place it in front of doors. When using an extension ladder be sure that at least three rungs of each section overlap. Always secure straight or extension ladders at the top and use the four-to-one rule to position the base. If you are using it to access a roof or other elevated area make sure the ladder extends thirty-six inches above the landing. Once you have the ladder in place, take time to tie it off to prevent it from falling over.

There are certain precautions to take with specific types of ladders. Before using a metal ladder look for overhead power-lines or other potential electrocution hazards. As a matter of fact, many employers prohibit the use of metal ladders. Stepladders must be opened completely to allow the spreader brackets to lock, and never climb on the cross-bracing. Extension ladders should not be adjusted from above or while standing on the ladder.

When climbing up or down a ladder always face the ladder. Facing away doesn't allow you to maintain three points of contact. Do not climb ladders with your hands full of tools or material. Use a tag line or put them in a bucket and pull them up after you have reached your work area.

When working from a ladder don't reach too far to one side or the other. Keep your body centered between the side rails to help maintain your balance. Keep one hand securely on the ladder. If the ladder that you are using is too short for the job, stop what you are doing and get a longer one. **Never** stand on the top two steps.

If you use ladders safely, you'll always be a step above the rest. See OSHA standard 29 CFR 1926.1050-1060 for more information on ladders.

SAFETY REMINDER

Never allow more than one person on a ladder at a time unless the ladder is specifically designed for it.

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APR WEEK 3

Ladder Safety

Ladders allow us access to high or out-of-reach places. Whether you are trying to get up on a roof or climb down into a trench, you usually use a ladder. Many different types of ladders can be found on a construction site: straight ladders, extension ladders, fixed ladders, frame ladders, stepladders, and job-built ladders. Every trade uses ladders to extend the limits of its work area.

No matter what type of ladder you use, remember the following guidelines:

- ✓ Inspect ladders before use—check for broken rungs, sharp edges, and splinters.
- ✓ Remove any oil, grease, or slippery material from the ladder and from your boots.
- ✓ Immediately mark defective or broken ladders with "Do Not Use" so they can be easily identified.
- ✓ Set ladders on a firm, level surface and avoid placing them in doorways and high-traffic areas.
- ✓ When raising a ladder, always check for overhead electrical lines.
- ✓ Secure ladders to prevent them from falling.
- ✓ Only one person should be on a ladder at a time.
- ✓ Use both hands and face the ladder as you climb up or down.
- ✓ Do not exceed the load limit of the ladder.
- ✓ Do not overreach.
- ✓ Do not use a ladder in place of scaffolding or to support scaffold boards.

Remember these guidelines when using specific types of ladders:

- ✓ Never weld from a metal ladder.
- ✓ Open stepladders completely to allow the spreader to lock in place.
- ✓ Always secure straight ladders at the top.
- ✓ Maintain at least three rungs of overlap on extension ladders.
- ✓ Make sure straight and extension ladders are equipped with safety feet.
- ✓ Do not stand on the top two steps of a stepladder.

SAFETY REMINDER

Ladders have their ups and downs—ladder *safety* doesn't!

Always use the right ladder and use it safely.

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APR WEEK 4

Use and Erection of Ladders

Ladder safety is a must in construction. Ladders are designed to provide short term access to equipment or an elevated area. They are a very necessary tool on most jobs, but failure to follow basic rules for ladder safety can result in disaster. Falls from ladders cause injuries that range from minor bruises to broken bones and occasionally even death. Most ladder accidents can be prevented. Here are some basic safety rules to keep in mind whenever you use or set up a ladder.

- Carefully inspect every ladder prior to climbing. Check for broken rungs, split side rails, and other defects.
- Select a ladder that is the right length and weight for the job.
- Make sure that the ladder is on a sound base and secured to prevent tipping.
- Position an extension ladder before extending it, not the other way around. It's easier and safer.
- The top of the ladder must extend 36 inches above the landing.
- Look for overhead obstructions, especially electrical lines.
- Don't place a ladder in a doorway or busy walkway.
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Keep three-points of contact when climbing; two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand.
- Never climb a ladder with your hands full of tools, equipment, or supplies.
- Keep rungs and steps clean and free of grease, mud, oil, snow, and ice.
- Don't overreach when working from a ladder. Rule of thumb: keep your belt buckle between the rails.
- Never stand on either of the top two rungs or steps. If you cannot reach, get a longer ladder.
- When using a stepladder spread the legs and lock the hinge before climbing.

Most of us use ladders every day; but do we use them safely? It only takes moments to properly set up and inspect a ladder. That's time well spent considering the alternative—a painful fall and time off work.

SAFETY REMINDER

When performing electrical work, never use a metal ladder.

The metal can conduct electricity.

Use an approved fiberglass or wooden ladder.

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APR WEEK 5

Scaffolding I

A scaffold is a very common and useful tool in construction and, like every other tool we use, it must be in good condition and used properly. If a scaffold is assembled improperly or is erected on a base that is unstable, collapse of the structure is almost certain. A collapse can injure the people on the scaffolding as well as others on the ground or lower levels; not to mention the property damage it could cause. Let's review a few key points related to scaffold safety.

1. Erecting and Dismantling—When either erecting or dismantling supported scaffolds, OSHA requires a competent person to supervise the operation. This same competent person must also determine what type of fall protection is necessary and see that a safe means of access is provided for workers.
2. Inspections—Before each work shift and after any occurrence that could affect the structural integrity of the scaffold, a competent person must inspect the scaffold and its components for any visible defects. This competent person must have the authority to correct any problems. You should also inspect the scaffold personally; after all, it's your life that's on the line.
3. Training—Employers must train each employee who works on a scaffold about the hazards they may encounter and procedures to control those hazards.
4. Fall Protection—OSHA requires fall protection for everyone working on a scaffold at a height of 10 feet or more above a lower level. In many cases you may be required to wear a full body harness.
5. Guardrails—The height of the top rail for scaffolds manufactured **after** January 1, 2000 must be between 38 and 45 inches. When the crosspoint of crossbracing is used as a top rail, it must be between 38 and 48 inches above the work platform. Mid rails must be installed approximately halfway between the top rail and the platform. When the crosspoint of crossbracing is used as a mid rail, it must be 20 to 30 inches above the work surface.
6. Overhand Bricklaying—Overhand bricklaying from supported scaffolds requires a personal fall arrest system or guardrails on all sides except the side where the work is being done.

Keep in mind that when you're working on a scaffold you are more than likely working above someone else. Be sure that tools and materials are secure so they can't fall off your scaffold and injure someone below. More information on scaffold safety regulations is available beginning at 29 CFR 1926.450.

SAFETY REMINDER

Before moving a mobile scaffold, check that your route is clear and free of hazards.

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