

## FALL PROTECTION IN GENERAL INDUSTRY

Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. Employers must take measures in their workplaces to prevent employees from falling off overhead platforms, elevated work stations or into holes in the floor and walls.

### To prevent employees from being injured from falls, employers must:

- ◆ Guard every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk by use of a railing and toeboard or floor hole cover.
- ◆ Provide a guardrail and toeboard around every open-sided platform, floor or runway that is 4 feet or higher off the ground or next level.
- ◆ Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat of acid or a conveyor belt), employers must provide guardrails and toeboards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- ◆ Other means of fall protection that may be required on certain jobs include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railings and handrails.

### OSHA requires employers to:

- ◆ Provide working conditions that are free of known dangers.
- ◆ Keep floors in work areas in a clean and sanitary condition.
- ◆ Select and provide required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers.
- ◆ Train workers about job hazards in a language that they can understand.

## INJURY AND ILLNESS PREVENTION PROGRAMS

An injury and illness prevention program, is a proactive process to help employers find and fix workplace hazards before workers are hurt. We know these programs can be effective at reducing injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. Many workplaces have already adopted such approaches, for example as part of OSHA's cooperative programs. Not only do these employers experience dramatic decreases in workplace injuries, but they often report a transformed workplace culture that can lead to higher productivity and quality, reduced turnover, reduced costs, and greater employee satisfaction.

Thirty-four states and many nations around the world already require or encourage employers to implement such programs. The key elements common to all of these programs are management leadership, worker participation, hazard identification and assessment, hazard prevention and control, education and training, and program evaluation and improvement.

Based on the positive experience of employers with existing programs, OSHA believes that injury and illness prevention programs provide the foundation for breakthrough changes in the way employers identify and control hazards, leading to a significantly improved workplace health and safety environment.

Adoption of an injury and illness prevention program will result in workers suffering fewer injuries, illnesses and fatalities. In addition, employers will improve their compliance with existing regulations, and will experience many of the financial benefits of a safer and healthier workplace cited in published studies and reports by individual companies, including significant reductions in workers' compensation premiums.

### Background

In the four decades since the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) was signed into law, workplace deaths and reported occupational injuries have dropped by more than 60 percent.

To read the entire White Paper visit:

<http://1.usa.gov/w82WJC>



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## MONTHLY TOOLBOX TALK

Are you taking the necessary precautions?

## LADDERS & STAIRWAYS

### LADDERS AND STAIRWAYS

A STAIRWAY OR LADDER MUST BE PROVIDED FOR PERSONNEL USE WHEN THERE IS A BREAK IN ELEVATION OF 19 INCHES OR MORE AND NO RAMP, RUNWAY, SLOPED EMBANKMENT OR PERSONNEL HOIST IS PROVIDED.

#### STAIRWAYS

- A. EMPLOYEES SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO WALK ON STAIRWAY PANS WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN POURED UNLESS A WOOD FILLER PANEL OR OTHER SOLID MATERIAL IS FITTED TO THE TOP EDGE OF EACH PAN.
- B. STAIRWAYS WITH FOUR OR MORE RISERS OR RISING MORE THAN 30 INCHES MUST BE EQUIPPED WITH AT LEAST ONE HANDRAIL AND ONE RAILING ALONG EACH UNPROTECTED SIDE.
- C. TEMPORARY STAIRWAYS WHICH WILL NOT BE A PERMANENT PART OF THE STRUCTURE MUST HAVE LANDINGS OF NOT LESS THAN 30 INCHES IN DIRECTION OF TRAVEL AND AT LEAST 22 INCHES IN WIDTH EVERY 12 FEET OR LESS OF VERTICAL RISE.
- D. STAIRWAYS MUST BE KEPT CLEAR OF DEBRIS, MATERIALS AND PROTRUDING NAILS OR OTHER HAZARDOUS PROJECTIONS.

#### LADDERS

##### A) GENERAL

- 1. MANUFACTURED LADDERS MUST COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ANSI A14. 1, "PORTABLE WOOD LADDERS", ANSI A14.2, "PORTABLE METAL LADDERS" OR ANSI A14.5, "FIBERGLASS (PLASTIC) LADDERS".
- 2. JOB-MADE LADDERS MUST BE FABRICATED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE CRITERIA CONTAINED IN OSHA 1926.1052.
- 3. LADDERS SHOULD NOT BE PLACED IN PASSAGEWAYS, DOORWAYS OR ANY SIMILAR LOCATION THAT SUBJECTS IT TO DISPLACEMENT BY PERSONNEL, MOVING EQUIPMENT OR MATERIAL HANDLING. IF IT IS NECESSARY TO PLACE A LADDER IN A PASSAGEWAY OR DOORWAY, IT MUST BE PROTECTED BY BARRICADES AND WARNING SIGNS.
- 4. FACE THE LADDER AND USE BOTH HANDS WHEN GOING UP AND DOWN LADDERS.
- 5. DO NOT CARRY MATERIALS OR TOOLS UP OR DOWN A LADDER. MATERIALS AND TOOLS SHOULD BE LOWERED OR RAISED BY A ROPE OR OTHER MECHANICAL MEANS.
- 6. BROKEN OR DAMAGED LADDERS MUST NOT BE USED. LADDERS NEEDING REPAIRS MUST BE REPORTED TO A SUPERVISOR, TAGGED OUT AND REMOVED FROM THE WORK AREA.
- 7. THE LENGTH OF A LADDER SHALL BE SUFFICIENT TO EXTEND A MINIMUM OF 36" ABOVE THE TOP LANDINGS
- 8. LADDERS MUST HAVE GOOD LEVEL FOOTING AND BE SECURELY FASTENED AT TOP AND BOTTOM.
- 9. LADDERS MUST BE ERECTED AT THE PROPER ANGLE, THE BASE OF A LADDER SHOULD BE SET OUT AT LEAST ONE-FOURTH OF THE LADDER'S HEIGHT MEASURED FROM BOTTOM TO POINT OF BEARING.
- 10. THE AREAS AROUND THE TOP AND BASE OF LADDERS MUST BE KEPT CLEAN AND FREE OF TRIPPING HAZARDS THE SAME HOLDS TRUE FOR THE BOTTOM OF STAIRWAYS AND ON STAIRWAY PLATFORMS.
- 11. METAL LADDERS MUST NOT BE USED FOR ELECTRIC WELDING OR NEAR ANY ELECTRICAL LINES OR SERVICES.

##### B) STEPLADDERS

- 1. OPEN STEPLADDERS FULLY AND LOCK THE SPREADERS.
- 2. DO NOT STAND ON THE TOP TWO STEPS AND KEEP TOOLS OFF STEPS
- 3. WHEN USING A STEPLADDER ON GRATING, THE GRATING MUST BE COVERED WITH PLYWOOD.
- 4. DO NOT USE A STEPLADDER AS A STRAIGHT LADDER.

##### C) EXTENSION LADDERS

- 1. THE SECTIONS OF AN EXTENSION LADDER MUST BE OVERLAPPED A MINIMUM OF THREE RUNGS
- 2. EXTENSION LADDERS MUST NOT BE TAKEN APART AND SECTIONS USED SEPARATELY.
- 3. AFTER THE EXTENSION LADDER HAS BEEN RAISED TO THE DESIRED HEIGHT, CHECK THE SAFETY LATCHES TO ENSURE THEY ARE ENGAGED AND THE EXTENSION ROPE IS SECURED TO A RUNG ON THE BASE SECTION OF THE LADDER.

#### REQUIRED TRAINING

EMPLOYEES MUST BE TRAINED ON THE HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE USE OF LADDERS AND STAIRWAYS AND THE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED TO MINIMIZE THOSE HAZARDS. TRAINING MUST BE PROVIDED BY A COMPETENT PERSON AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1. THE NATURE OF FALL HAZARDS IN THE WORK AREA.
- 2. CORRECT PROCEDURE FOR ERECTING, MAINTAINING AND DISASSEMBLING FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS.
- 3. THE PROPER CONSTRUCTION, USE AND CARE IN USE OF LADDERS AND STAIRWAYS.
- 4. THE MAXIMUM INTENDED LOAD-CARRYING CAPACITIES OF LADDERS.
- 5. THE STANDARDS INCLUDED IN SUBPART X, OSHA 1926. RETRAINING MUST BE PROVIDED AS NECESSARY.