

JOB AID
Fall Protection

Fall Protection

Use fall protection anytime you are working on an unprotected or elevated work surface from which you could fall. Fall protection is required when working 4 to 6 feet above the ground. Ask your manager or supervisor for guidance about using fall protection on your worksite.

Common Fall Hazards

Common fall hazards include:

- Floor holes
- Open-sided floors
- Roof edges
- Skylights
- Ladders
- Mobile elevated work platforms such as scissor lifts and aerial lifts

Mistakes that may cause a fall include:

- Not respecting fall hazards
- Not paying attention
- Equipment/tool failure
- Slips
- Overreaching
- Complacency

Methods of Fall Protection

Use fall protection when:

- Guardrails are removed
- Guardrails/covers are not able to be installed
- You are working hands-free

Primary fall protection includes footing, balance, handholds, stable work surfaces, and positioning equipment.

Secondary fall protection is classified as active or passive:

- **Passive** systems include guardrails, covers and safety nets
- **Active** systems include:
 - **Work positioning:** Allows you to work hands-free
 - **Fall restraint:** Prevents you from falling off an edge or into an opening
 - **Fall arrest:** Catches your body after you have fallen

When planning to use personal fall protection, consider free fall, clearance and swing fall:

- **Free fall** is the distance traveled from the point where you start falling to the point where your fall protection system begins to slow you down
- **Clearance** is the distance required for your personal fall arrest equipment to activate, decelerate and then completely stop your fall
- **Swing fall** can occur when you walk away from under your anchor point. When you fall, you will swing back under your anchor point like a pendulum

Fall Protection Equipment

Personal fall protection includes the following components:

- **Body support** includes a full body harness
- **Connectors** may be lanyards, snaphooks or carabiners
- **Anchor points** are the points at which you attach your anchorage connector
 - Use anchor points that are as high as possible and located at least at D-ring level
 - Anchor to a structure that can handle a 5,000-pound load or that a qualified person has identified for you

- Make sure you have enough clearance for your fall protection system to stop you before your body strikes an object below
- **Self-Retracting Lifelines (SRLs)** require much less clearance than a lanyard and allow more freedom of movement
- **Vertical** and **horizontal lifelines** are also used on some worksites

Inspecting and Maintaining Equipment

You must inspect fall protection equipment before every use

- Inspect body support more frequently when welding or working with chemicals or sharp edges
- Inspect connectors periodically throughout the day

A qualified person must also inspect equipment annually.

If equipment is ever involved in a fall, even if it does not show signs of damage, remove it from use and return it to your supervisor.

To keep your fall protection equipment working, you must:

- Store equipment properly
- Never throw it into a storage box
- Keep it dry and clean
- Keep it out of direct sunlight