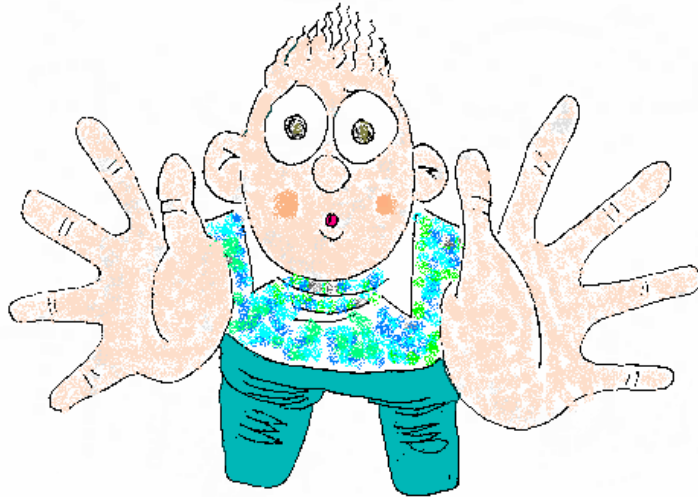


**.DON'T GET CAUGHT  
IN THE**



**DROP ZONE**

**FALLS KILL**

**Don't Get Caught in the Drop Zone:** Time and time again – right here in the southeast United States, too many workers have lost their lives due to falls. It only takes a few seconds without fall protection to be caught in the drop zone. Don't become a statistic. In the southeast for the year 2000, there were 41 fatalities due to falls that occurred in Federal OSHA's jurisdiction.

In construction work – across the nation and especially in the southeast, falls are one of the leading causes of worker fatalities. There are several measures you can take to prevent falls. There's a lot you have to do if everyone working at heights is going to make it home safely every night. The OSHA standards that cover most situations requiring fall protection can be found in 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M.

#### **When is fall protection needed?**

The rule sets a uniform threshold height of six feet. This means everyone working at six feet or higher must be protected from fall hazards .

#### **What kind of equipment?**

Employers can select fall protection measures and equipment to fit the type of work being performed. The three most common methods of providing fall protection are guardrails systems, safety net systems, and personal fall arrest systems.

#### **What are guardrails?**

Guardrails are barriers erected to prevent falls to a lower level. They can be used to protect employees from falls from unprotected sides and edges; through holes including skylights; from ramps, runways, or other walkways; and into or onto dangerous equipment.

#### **What are safety nets?**

Safety nets are used as protection for unprotected sides, leading edges, working on the face of formwork or reinforcing steel, overhand bricklaying, work on roofs, precast concrete work, residential construction, and wall openings. Safety nets must be installed as close as practicable under the walking/working surface on which employees are working, but never more than 30 feet below that level.

#### **What is a personal fall arrest system?**

Personal fall arrest equipment protects you from falling when working around unprotected sides and edges, leading edge work, hoist areas when loading or unloading materials, form and reinforcing steel work, overhand bricklaying, work on low-sloped or steep roofs, precast concrete work, residential construction, and wall openings.

Among other requirements, the system consists of the following:

- 1) An anchorage point that can support 5,000 lbs.
- 2) Limiting the free fall distance to 6 feet.

#### **How do you know what to use and how to use it?**

Whenever an employee is going to be exposed to fall hazards, they must get training. The training must include:

- 1) Recognizing fall hazards
- 2) Procedures for erecting and disassembling the fall protection used.
- 3) Understanding the OSHA rules.

#### **Other fall protection systems**

The fall protection rules list other systems and equipment you can use in certain situations. They are:

- *Safety monitoring system*—can only be used under certain circumstances when performing low-slope roofing work, leading edge work, precast concrete work, and residential construction.
- *Covers*—required for holes, including skylights.
- *Warning line*—must be erected around all sides of the roof work area, and shall consist of ropes, wires, or chains and supporting stanchions. Can only be used when performing low-slope roofing work.
- *Positioning device system*—used on the face of form work or reinforcing steel structures and other situations where hands must be free to work.
- *Controlled access zone*—shall consist of ropes, wires, tapes, or equivalent materials, and supporting stanchions, or by any other means that restricts access. Each line must be flagged or otherwise clearly marked at not more than 6-foot intervals with high-visibility material. Can only be used when performing leading edge work, overhand bricklaying, precast concrete work, and residential construction.
- *Fall protection plan*—available only to employees performing leading edge, precast concrete erection, or residential construction when other means are not feasible.
- *Protection from falling through holes*—employees must also be protected from falling through holes by the use of covers. Covers for holes in floors, roofs and other walking/working surfaces must meet the following requirements:
  - Covers located in roadways and vehicular aisles must be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the maximum axle load of the largest vehicle expected to cross over the cover.
  - All other covers must be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the weight of employees, equipment and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time.
  - All covers must be secured when installed to prevent accidental displacement by the wind, equipment or employees.
  - All covers must be color-coded or marked with the word “hole” or “cover” to provide warning of the hazard.

Note: This provision does not apply to cast iron manhole covers or steel grates used on streets or roadways.

#### **Are there other rules besides Subpart M?**

Look in the following sections for rules that apply when Subpart M does not:

- Scaffolds which are covered in Subpart L
- Cranes and Derricks which are covered in Subpart N
- Steel Erection which is covered in Subpart R
- Tunneling which is covered in Subpart S
- Electric power transmission and distribution which are covered in Subpart V
- Stairways and Ladders which are covered in Subpart X

Whatever the method used, it is very important to consult the OSHA standard to get the proper guidance.

