

Fall Protection – Are you protecting your employees?



According to the study cited below: In 2022, nearly 1 in 5 workplace deaths occurred in the construction industry. 38% of those were due to slips, trips, and falls.

<https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2024/a-look-at-falls-slips-and-trips-in-the-construction-industry.htm>

Please be aware of these other important changes related to this standard:

- Employers must demonstrate the infeasibility of fall protection if conventional fall protection is not used.
- The employer has the burden of establishing an appropriate fall protection plan.
- A qualified person must develop a **site-specific, written fall protection plan** when alternative fall protection is used.
- OSHA's definition of **Qualified Person** is "one who is familiar with the construction and operation of the equipment and the hazards involved".
- Slide guards can no longer be used in place of conventional fall protection unless a written, site-specific fall protection plan is in place.

Are you protecting your employees from fatal or catastrophic falls?

As of December 22, 2010, residential construction must comply with fall protection standards. OSHA began enforcement of this standard June 16, 2011.

In an effort to reduce the high number of fall-related fatalities in residential construction, OSHA rescinded a compliance directive that allowed residential contractors to use easier fall protection alternatives. Residential construction laborers must now follow OSHA standard 1926.501(b)(13) which states that employees must now use conventional fall protection, including:

- Guardrail systems;
- Safety net systems; or
- Personal fall arrest systems.

Under the new directive, (STD 03-11-002), employers who wish to use alternative fall protection measures in residential construction must meet all the requirements in 1926.501(b)(13) and 1926.502(k). In addition, fall protection plans used to comply with those standards must be site-specific and in writing.

The new compliance directive was posted in the December 22, 2010 Federal Register.

These websites provide some guidance, as well as more details on the residential construction fall protection:

<https://www.osha.gov/enforcement/directives/std-03-11-002>

<http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-32154.pdf>

<http://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/resources.html>

<http://www.osha.gov/doc/topics/residentialprotection/index.html>

As reported by OSHA National Safety Stand Down 2016.

