

Falls

Wily Coyote always seems to fall into a deep canyon and not be injured at all. People can't.

Then why do we seem to have trouble getting workers to pay attention to the fall hazards around them?

Guide for Discussion

The following items represent the bulk of the exposure to falls on site.

Ladders:

- Always use the right ladder.
- Set them on level ground and tie them off at the top (for security).
- Do not over reach.
- Do not over extend yourself on the ladder.
- Always face the ladder and try to use both hands when climbing.

Floor Openings:

- Floor openings should be properly covered.
- Covers must be able to support walls the same as the floor.
- Covers should be firmly attached to the floor/walking/working surface.
- Covers should be marked as such. For example: "Cover," or "Do Not Remove Floor Opening Cover."
- Consider wall openings and uncompleted stairways as openings with suitable protection provided.

Stairways:

- Use handrails.
- Watch where you step.
- Keep your view clear.
- Concentrate on the stairs.
- Do not run up or down the stairs.
- Keep stair well clean.

Housekeeping:

- Always try to provide good footing.
- Keep tools, trash, scrap materials out of walkways.
- Clean as you go.
- Always be wary of oil, ice or snow.

Additional Discussion Notes:

- Balance. Wear appropriate footwear when necessary.

Remember:

- Paying attention to things around you like ladders, floor openings, stairways and good housekeeping will help prevent a fall.

Ladders

Injuries in the workplace because of ladder are commonplace. Falls from ladders can be as painful as a fall from a roof; about a third of all reported falls are falls from ladders. (*) Many of the fall related injuries result from the improper use or the use of a defective ladder.

Step/extension ladders are made to access/egress upper levels, not to be used as work platforms. There are specifically designed ladders for use as work platforms such as order pickers. These ladders are constructed with a small platform and guardrail. The following safe work rules should be observed when working with ladders.

Guide for Discussion

Inspection:

- Look for missing or loose cleats at the bottom.
- Look for loose or missing screws, bolts or nails on job made ladders
- Look for cracked, broken, split, dented or badly worn rungs, cleats or side rails.
- Splinters on wood ladders.
- Corrosion on metal ladders.

Ladder Use

- Always use the right ladder for the right job.
- Don't set your ladder in a walkway or door opening.
- Keep the area at the top and bottom of the ladder clear of tool cords, tools, material and garbage.
- Always set the ladder on solid footing.
- Use a twenty-five percent (25%) angle on the slope of the ladder.
- When using extension ladders, the three (3) top rungs must extend beyond the landing platform. (Or the top of an extension ladder must be 36" (3 feet) above the landing.
- Don't lean to the side when on a ladder or you may tip over.
- Do not carry tools or materials on a ladder. Use both hands when climbing a ladder to grab onto the side rails. If it is necessary to move material or tools up a ladder, first climb up, then pull up the work with a hand line.
- Only one person on a ladder at a time (unless the ladder is double cleated).
- Always secure the top of the ladder to prevent it from sliding.
- Never lean a step ladder; always fully open a step ladder.
- Always face the ladder.

Additional Discussion Notes:

- Always tie off the ladder. That way it stays where you put it.

Remember, when you are on a ladder, you can fall. If you can fall, you can get hurt. Use ladders safely.

FULL BODY HARNESES/LIFELINES

Full Body Harnesses, a connector (for example, a self-retracting lanyard), lifelines and anchors are all part of a Personal Fall Arrest System (or PFAS).

PFAS is generally required when working at ten (10) feet in the workplace.

Falls account for over a quarter of all construction injuries.

It seems that some workers don't want to take the time to put their PFAS on, or worse, feel they don't need the equipment. We are sure that every person who was injured or died from a fall would have gladly worn their PFAS if they had only known they were about to fall.

Guide for Discussion

- Inspect the equipment (harness, hardware, connector, and lifeline) before each use.
- Never use equipment, which is not in good condition.
- Use only rated equipment. Remember, the PFAS must withstand 5,000 pounds of dead load.
- Always secure lanyards to a suitable anchor, above your work area if possible.
- Don't mix or modify any of the safety equipment.
- Never allow acids, caustics or other corrosive materials to come into contact with any of the equipment.
- Store your equipment in a dry place, out of the sun.
- Replace damaged equipment; remove it from service as soon as possible as it is determined to be defective.
- Use the equipment required.

Remember:

Don't allow yourself to be lulled into a false sense of security. Always provide yourself with some fall insurance. Regularly wear your PFAS and keep it attached to a lifeline.

The life you save may be yours.