

# HEALTH AND SAFETY ADVISORY

## Working at Heights—Site-Specific Training

Falling from heights continues to be a leading cause of injuries and fatalities in the Ontario construction industry. Despite the fact that working at heights (WAH) training is mandatory and must meet a provincial standard, workers are still dying or suffering life-altering injuries.

All Ontario workers on a construction project who may use a method of fall protection to protect themselves from a fall hazard must receive WAH training that has been approved by the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO). In addition, a WAH refresher course must be taken every three years.

However, an important part of WAH training that is often overlooked is the requirement for the employer to provide **site-specific WAH training**.

CPO-approved WAH training is only the first step. Knowing the specific fall hazards on site and how to protect against those hazards is the key to keeping workers safe and reducing the number of fall-related incidents.

### Legal Requirements

According to the Construction Projects regulation (O. Reg. 213/91):

*26.2 (1) An employer shall ensure that a worker who may use a fall protection system is adequately trained in its use and given **adequate oral and written instructions by a competent person.***

*(1.1) In addition to the requirements of subsection (1), an employer shall ensure that a worker who may use a fall protection system meets the **working at heights training requirements** of Ontario Regulation 297/13 (Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and Training).*

A *competent person* has the knowledge, training, and experience to organize the work and its performance (see the complete definition in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*).



### Site-Specific WAH Training

Adequate oral and written instructions given to a worker should include:

- Informing them about the actual fall hazards they may be exposed to on the jobsite
- Reviewing the procedures for protecting themselves against these fall hazards
- Training them on the particular equipment they will be using on the site.

These instructions should be a part of the employer's site-specific training. Training can also include providing instruction to the worker on such things as:

- How to inspect anchors systems and other system components
- How to use the equipment that is connecting the system together
- How to understand the limitations of the equipment and calculate fall distance
- How to respond to an emergency situation if a fall were to occur (i.e., on-site rescue procedures).

An inspector with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD) can ask for written proof of WAH training (O. Reg. 213/91, s.26.2(4)). This not only includes a valid WAH training certificate but also site-specific training information such as the date it was given, what was addressed (e.g., was the worker trained on the specific equipment they are using?), and the name of the *competent person* who provided the training.

## Developing Site-Specific WAH Training

Below are some suggestions for developing effective site-specific WAH training.

### 1. Conduct a hazard assessment of the site.

A hazard assessment or Job Safety Analysis (JSA) will show what the hazards are, where they are located, and where fall protection is required. IHSA recommends that each site should have a customized **Fall Protection Work Plan** (BR005).

### 2. Put controls in place to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of a fall.

Find the solutions to prevent any fall-related hazards found during the hazard assessment. Solutions could include eliminating the hazard by putting up guardrails or controlling the hazard by finding appropriate anchor locations and figuring out what type of fall protection equipment is needed. These solutions should be included in the *Fall Protection Work Plan*.

### 3. Develop a fall arrest rescue plan.

Before anyone uses a fall arrest system on a project, the employer is legally required to develop written procedures for rescuing a worker whose fall has been arrested. Having a good rescue plan in place and making sure that everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency can save a life.

### 4. Write it down.

Keep a record of all site-specific WAH training done at the site. Include details such as who the trainer was, who was trained, what was discussed, etc. That way, if an inspector comes to your site and asks for this information, you will be able to provide it.

IHSA recommends that supervisors keep a log book to record everything that happens at a jobsite in case questions such as these come up. IHSA offers a **Supervisor Log Book** (RF008).

## REMEMBER

It's important that everyone understands and follows the Fall Protection Work Plan and fall arrest rescue procedures. Make sure they're posted in a conspicuous place at the project where workers can see them.

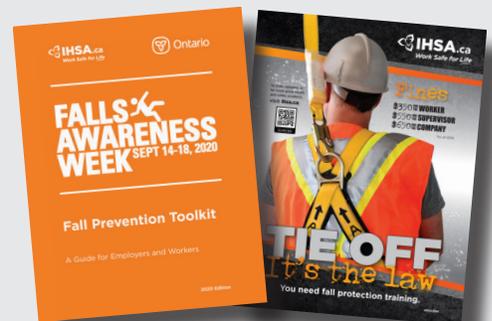
## How IHSA Can Help

IHSA has put together a **Fall Prevention Toolkit** (W016), which contains resources to help you develop site-specific WAH training. It includes the *Fall Protection Work Plan* (BR005), JSA forms, and fall-related safety talks. Download it at:

[ihsa.ca/products/W016](https://ihsa.ca/products/W016)

Also, our **Fall Prevention Topic Page** contains additional resources such as posters, stickers, and a sample **fall arrest rescue plan**. Visit it at:

[ihsa.ca/falls](https://ihsa.ca/falls)



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