



Safety Talk

Falling-object hazards

Explain dangers

The most common injuries workers suffer from falling objects are contusions, fractures, strains, and sprains. The objects that commonly fall range from large items such as roof trusses and steel beams to small items such as fasteners and small hand tools.

Identify controls

Physical controls involve physically stopping the object from falling (or from falling very far).

Guardrails—Toeboards must be installed on all guardrails to stop objects from falling down to the level below. They must be a minimum of 4" high and installed flush with the surface. If you pile tools, equipment, or materials higher than 4" high, you should put plywood panels or screening on the guardrails to prevent materials from falling down to the level below and stop small objects from falling through the openings between rails. As best practice, use paneling all the time, not just when tools or material are stacked higher than 4".

Open grating covers—If you are performing work on open grating, place non-slip plywood or a similar product on top of the grating to prevent small objects from falling through it.

Barricades and overhead protective structures—Use barricades to block off exclusion zones below the work area. Combine barricades with signs that indicate it is an exclusion zone and entry is prohibited. This includes hoisting areas. When it is not practical to use barricades for exclusion zones, use overhead protective structures. For minimum design requirements, refer to section 64 (3) in the construction regulation.

Carts with sides—When moving equipment, tools, or material, always use a cart that is an appropriate size for what you are moving and make sure the cart has sides. If you need to extend something over the sides of the cart, you must secure the item and the cart must be stable.

Tool lanyards and tethers—These can attach tools directly to the worker's harness or tool belt to prevent tools from dropping to a lower level.

Procedural controls involve changing the way you work so that objects can't fall.

Securing loads—When lifting, make sure the load is balanced and secured. Check for small or loose pieces before you lift. Otherwise, a shift in the load or windy conditions could cause the load to fall. If you're placing a load on a scaffold or a platform, make sure there are properly built guardrails in the work area that include mid-rails and toeboards.

Good hoisting practices—Never lift, lower, or swing a load over someone's head. Use barricades to block off areas where loads are being lifted or lowered. If the operator's view is impeded in any way, use a signaller to assist the operator. Always use proper rigging procedures and ensure the rigging equipment is in good condition.

Good housekeeping—Keep tools and other materials away from edges, railings, and other elevated surfaces. Always stack materials on flat surfaces and secure them, if necessary, to avoid movement. When working, be aware of your surroundings and watch that you don't inadvertently knock or hit something off the level you are work on down to the level below.

Proper material stacking—To prevent tipping, store materials and equipment at least six feet away from an edge. If you are working near openings, arrange materials so that they can't roll or slide in the direction of the opening. It is always a good idea to use opening covers as well. Wind can also pose a danger. Always secure material to prevent movement. When you remove something from a secured pile, don't forget to re-secure the material.

Demonstrate

Perform a site inspection to identify falling-object hazards.