Do you have a

Fall Protection Work Plan?

Falls are still one of the leading causes of injury and death at work in many of IHSA's rate groups. In 2013, falls were responsible for 25% of lost-time injuries (LTIs), 45% of critical injuries, and 10 fatalities. Compared with 2012, that represents an 11% increase in the number of LTIs from falls and twice the number of fatalities.

Obviously, more needs to be done to protect workers at heights. As an employer in Ontario, you are legally required to protect workers who are exposed to fall hazards. To help you do this, IHSA has developed a Fall Protection Work Plan. It's a step-by-step guide for controlling fall hazards and is intended to offer guidance and instruction for workers using fall protection. It's easy to follow and will help you choose the best method of fall protection that is available to you under the circumstances.

Recognizing and assessing the fall hazard

The first step is to recognize and assess the fall hazard. Identify any existing and potential hazards before work begins. Assess the likelihood and potential severity of the hazard and prioritize the hazards according to risk (Step 1).

Eliminating the fall hazard

The next step is to try to prevent a fall from happening (Step 2). This could involve:

- relocating the work to a place where the fall hazard does not exist (e.g., building a roof on the ground and hoisting it into place or moving an air-handling unit from near the edge of a roof to the centre)
- delaying the work until permanent safety features can be installed (e.g., permanent guardrails, walls, parapets, or other structural features)
- erecting a guardrail system, which prevents workers from falling off an open edge
- covering floor or roof openings so that workers cannot fall through them
- using an elevated work platform (EWP), that has permanent guardrails
- using a travel-restraint system, which allows workers to travel just far enough to reach the edge but not far enough to fall over.

Controlling the fall hazard

If you can't eliminate the fall hazard, the next-best option (Step 3) is to implement controls such as:

- a fall arrest system, which will stop the fall before any part of the worker can hit the surface or an object below
- a safety net, which is installed around the perimeter of a building or at floor or roof openings to arrest a worker's fall.

By allowing a worker to fall, there is an increased likelihood of injury. Also, if you choose this option, you must have a plan to rescue a suspended worker whose fall has been arrested (Step 7).

Creating the Fall Protection Work Plan

Instructions for creating the Fall Protection Work Plan are listed below.

- The plan is to be prepared by the supervisor and workers (competent persons) most directly involved in the work.
- More than one control or elimination method can be selected for the work. For example, travel restraint can be used when guardrails are being installed.
- The plan should be approved by the management supervisor of the person who prepared it (Step 8).
- The plan should be read by all workers involved in the work. Workers can acknowledge that they have read the requirements and understand their responsibilities under the plan by signing a Worker Sign-off Sheet (Step 9).
- An emergency plan should be developed even if a fall rescue plan is not required.
- If the work situation changes and the Fall Protection Work Plan has to be amended, the changes should be communicated to all workers involved.

Fall Protection Work Plan

Company name _____ Project _____

Supervisor in charge _____ Work location _____

Estimated start date and duration _____

Description of work _____

Fall protection equipment _____

Manufacturer's reference material _____

Step 1: Identify the fall hazard. (Provide a description.) _____

_____

_____

Step 2: Try to eliminate the fall hazard.

Can the work be relocated to a place where a fall hazard does not exist?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can the work be delayed until permanent safety features are installed?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can a guardrail system be used? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Does it meet the strength requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.3? ❑ Is it no more than 30 cm (12 in) from the edge being protected? ❑ Has the it been installed according to the manufacturer's recommendations? ❑ If it is made of wood, can it resist all loads that a worker may subject it to?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can floor or roof openings be covered? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Does the cover meet the strength requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.3 (2)? ❑ Is it securely fastened? ❑ Is it adequately identified as a cover?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can an elevated work platform (EWP) be used? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Is the EWP on a level surface? ❑ Is the surface capable of supporting its load? ❑ Has the worker received fall protection training and been trained in the use of this specific EWP?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can a travel-restraint system be used? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Is the system set up to prevent the worker from reaching the fall hazard? ❑ Does the system meet the requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.4? ❑ Does the anchor point meet the requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.7? ❑ Have other fall hazards in the work area been considered? If not, you may need to use a fall arrest system. ❑ Has the equipment been certified by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA)? ❑ Has the equipment and system been inspected before use, as per the manufacturer's instructions and CSA requirements?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can scaffolding or pump jacks be used?	❑ Y ❑ N

Step 3: Take steps to control the fall hazard.
If you choose this option, you must have a fall rescue plan in place and the workers must be trained on it before work begins—it's the law.

Can a fall arrest system be used? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Is a fall rescue plan in place to rescue a suspended worker? (See Step 7.) ❑ Has the worker been trained in fall protection and the specific fall arrest system being used? ❑ Is the system set up to prevent the worker from hitting an object below? Have other fall hazards in the work area been considered? ❑ Does the fall arrest system meet the requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.6? ❑ Does the anchor point meet the requirements of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.7? ❑ Is the anchor point located so that the lifeline is at a 90° angle from the edge? If not and the worker fell, they could swing and hit a wall or column or the lifeline could break as it slid across the edge. ❑ Have horizontal lifeline systems been engineered? Have they been installed according to the engineer's requirements? ❑ Has the fall arrest equipment been certified by the CSA? ❑ Has the equipment or system been inspected before use, as per the manufacturer's instructions and CSA requirements?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can a safety net be used? If Yes, consider the following: ❑ Is a fall rescue plan in place to rescue a suspended worker? (See Step 7.) ❑ Do the safety nets meet the requirements of of O. Reg. 213/91, s. 26.8? ❑ Have the safety nets been installed according to the manufacturer's instructions? ❑ Have the safety nets been inspected according to the manufacturer's instructions?	❑ Y ❑ N
Can any other controls be used? If Yes, describe them:	❑ Y ❑ N

Step 4: Make a diagram of the location of the fall hazard and include any relevant details.

Step 5: Describe the system setup or work procedures. _____

Step 6: Calculate the fall clearance. _____

Step 7: Create a fall rescue plan to rescue a suspended worker. _____

Rescue equipment: _____ **Rescuers' names:** _____

Step 8: Get approvals.

Prepared by _____

Approved by _____ **Date approved** _____

Step 9: Create a Worker Sign-off Sheet.
Workers need to acknowledge that they have read the requirements and understand their responsibilities under the Fall Protection Work Plan.