

# Safety *talk*

## Working at heights—Site-specific training

### Explain dangers

Falling from heights continues to be a leading cause of injuries and fatalities in the construction industry. Despite having standardized working at heights (WAH) training and making this training mandatory, workers are still dying. In fact, three Ontario workers succumbed to fall-related injuries in January.\*

Incidents such as these show that WAH training is only the first step. Knowing the specific fall hazards on the site and putting controls in place to prevent these hazards is the key to staying safe and decreasing the number of fall-related injuries. This requires site-specific training and written proof that it has been done.

### Identify controls

Section 26.2 of the Construction Projects regulation (213/91) states that the employer must ensure that a worker who may use a fall protection system must:

- Be trained in its use
- Be given oral and written instructions by a competent person
- Have met the working at heights training requirements.

This means that everyone who works at heights on a construction project must have approved WAH training and be made aware of the site-specific fall hazards they may encounter. This includes getting instruction on the equipment they will be using.

A Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspector requires proof of WAH training in writing and you must produce it when asked. However, the inspector may also ask what instruction and information you received on the site. If you've received site-specific WAH training, you should be able to answer yes to the following questions.

### Has a hazard assessment been done?

This will show you where the hazards are and where fall protection is required. Even better, each site should have a fall protection work plan. It's important that everyone understands and follows the work plan.

### Have controls been put in place to eliminate or reduce the likelihood of a fall?

Find the solutions to any fall-related hazards found during the hazard assessment. These should be included in your work plan. 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.

### Has a fall rescue plan been developed?

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

### Demonstrate

With your crew, review the site-specific fall hazards and the controls that were put in place. Make sure everyone understands when fall protection is required and what equipment needs to be used.

Review the site's fall rescue plan and fall protection work plan. Make sure they're posted in a conspicuous place at the project and show your crew where they're located. (If your company doesn't have them, visit the **Fall Prevention and Working at Heights** topic page at [ihsa.ca](http://ihsa.ca) and download templates you can use to develop them.)

\*Based on information provided by the Ministry of Labour (MOL), February 2018.