

Fall Protection Toolbox Talk

A ready-to-run 5-minute crew talk · Working at Heights · 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M / 1910 Subpart D

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How to run this talk (5 minutes): Gather the crew before work at heights begins. Read each talking point aloud, then ask the discussion questions and let the crew answer. Close with the one rule, walk the work area for unguarded edges and openings, and pass the sign-in sheet on page 2. **Thresholds depend on the industry and task:** common federal baselines are 4 ft in general industry and 6 ft in construction, with separate rules for scaffolds, ladders, and dangerous equipment — determine the governing standard before work begins. This is an awareness refresher — it does **not** replace the formal fall-protection training and equipment your employer must provide.

Slips, Trips & Falls — Footing & Housekeeping

- **Wear footwear selected for the surface and hazards.** It should fit securely, provide suitable traction, and carry any protective rating identified by the employer's hazard assessment.
- **Spot slippery surfaces** before you step — polished marble, smooth metal, varnished wood, ice, and wet concrete or vinyl. Watch for water, grease, oil, sawdust, and debris.
- **Good housekeeping prevents falls.** Keep walking and working surfaces clean, dry, and clear. Pick up tools and materials; fix or report damaged stair treads, torn carpet, and leaks.
- **On stairs:** keep one hand on the rail, never run or skip steps, and don't carry a load so big it blocks your view of your feet.

Guarding Edges, Holes & Openings

- Fall hazards hide at **edges** (stairs, catwalks, rooftops, loading docks) and **openings** (skylights, manholes, floor holes where ladders or stairs pass through).
- **Guarding** puts a physical barrier in the way: a standard railing (top rail ~42 in, a midrail, able to withstand a 200-lb force), plus covers over holes and skylights and screens on railings.
- Toeboards (at least 3½ in) and screens keep tools and materials from falling onto people below.
- **See an unguarded edge or opening? Report it now** so a rail or cover goes up before someone steps into it.

Ladders — Inspect, Set Up, Climb

- **Inspect before every use** for damage, rust, and broken or missing parts. Tag a defective ladder "Do not use" and get another.
- Set both feet firm and level. Lean a straight/extension ladder at the **4-to-1 angle** (1 ft out for every 4 ft of height) and extend it **3 ft above** the landing.
- Keep **three points of contact**; carry nothing in your hands — use a tool belt or haul items up with a rope. Keep your belt buckle centered and don't lean.
- Fixed ladders extending more than **24 ft**: a ladder installed on or after Nov 19, 2018 (or a replaced section) needs a **personal fall-arrest or ladder-safety system**; a qualifying pre-2018 ladder may currently use a cage or well under the transition rule in 1910.28(b)(9) — check the current regulation.

Scaffolds — Access & Fall Protection

- Under the federal construction-scaffold rule, protect each worker on a platform **more than 10 ft** above a lower level — using the protection prescribed for the scaffold type by 1926.451(g), commonly a **guardrail system, a personal fall-arrest system, or both**. Stricter rules may apply at lower heights.
- **Get up the right way:** built-in stairs, a stair tower, or a secured ladder — **never climb the cross-bracing**.
- Keep the platform clear of tools and debris, and never use buckets or boxes as makeshift stools to extend your reach.

Personal Fall Arrest (PFAS)

- Three parts: a **body harness**, a **connecting device** (lanyard or self-retracting lifeline), and an **anchorage**. Fit the straps snug at thighs, shoulders, chest, and pelvis.
- Connect only to an approved anchorage holding at least **5,000 lb per attached worker** — or one designed, installed, and used under a **qualified person's** supervision as part of a complete system with a safety factor of at least two — and independent of any anchorage supporting platforms. **Never** tie off to guardrails, conduit, vents, or standpipes.

Discussion — Ask the Crew

1. Which walking surfaces or stairways in *our* facility get slippery — and what can we fix today?
2. Where do we have edges, floor holes, or openings right now that need a railing or a cover?
3. What would make you tag a ladder "out of service" — and what is the 4-to-1 setup rule?
4. If you had to tie off here today, where is a good 5,000-lb anchor — and what should you never tie off to?

The one rule to remember today: Falls from **unguarded edges and openings, ladders, roofs, and scaffolds** can be fatal. Before exposure, install the required guardrail or cover, use the required fall-protection system, and use only an approved means of access — never climb the cross-bracing.

This talk is a refresher, not certification. OSHA requires employers to train every worker exposed to fall hazards and provide the equipment (29 CFR 1926.503 / 1910.30). The **Fall Protection Training Kit** gives you the full video (available in English or Spanish), the quiz & answer key, Presenter's Guide, slideshow, certificates, and sign-in sheets — reusable for every new hire. [SafetyVideos.com/Fall_Protection_Training_p/79.htm](https://www.safetyvideos.com/Fall_Protection_Training_p/79.htm)

Toolbox Talk Sign-In Sheet

Attendance record · Fall Protection Toolbox Talk · 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M / 1910 Subpart D

Date

Location / Facility

Presented by

#	Name (print)	Signature	Job title / Department
1			
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By signing above, each attendee acknowledges they participated in this fall protection toolbox talk on the date shown. Retain this sheet with your training records. **Note:** attendance at a toolbox talk is not fall-protection training or certification — keep it with, not in place of, each worker's formal training records under 29 CFR 1926.503 / 1910.30.