Building construction, erecting scaffolding, roofing, window cleaning, painting and demolition are examples of jobs that may require working at heights. Falls from elevation can cause serious injuries, such as concussions and broken bones, and can result in long-term disability or even fatality.

What’s the hazard?

A hazard is something that may expose a person to a risk of injury. Falls from elevation are often the result of a combination of factors. Below are examples of hazards that often contribute to falls and injuries when working at heights. Which could occur in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Examples of hazards that could contribute to falls from elevation include:

working without proper fall protection

not following safe work procedures

not checking the condition of equipment

slippery or uneven surfaces

overexertion

not using equipment properly

using equipment without proper training

What can be done to prevent falls when working at heights?

The most effective way to prevent a fall is to eliminate the need to work at heights. If that's not possible, there are a few ways to reduce the risk.

Safe work procedures, like using three points of contact when climbing onto or down from equipment, can also prevent injuries when working at heights.

Guardrails can form a protective barrier around an opening or edge to prevent a fall to a lower level.

Fall restraint systems can prevent injury by attaching workers to a fixed-length line that prevents them from travelling too close to an opening or edge.

Fall arrest systems (including a lanyard or lifeline, a harness and an anchor) can prevent injury after a fall by stopping workers from hitting the surface below.

**Required by law:**

employers must do hazard assessments and identify any hazards in their workplaces, including hazards when working at heights

employers must have safe work procedures for identified hazards that cannot be eliminated

employers must offer training to employees on safe work procedures

employers must have procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents and injuries, and offer training to employees on those procedures

employers must provide and ensure fall restraint or arrest protection is correctly used where required

employers must have fall protection programs where required

workers must correctly wear all required components of a personal protection system for fall arrest

employers must ensure guards, guardrails, safety nets or other devices are installed and inspected where required

employers and workers have specific requirements when working at heights in building construction, see Yukon *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Part 10

**Additional controls:**

practise good housekeeping

inspect and maintain footwear

inspect, maintain and replace fall protection equipment as required by the manufacturer

carry only as much can be safely handled

maintain appropriate pace

stay alert and avoid distractions

maintain quality of walking surfaces

double check surfaces when carrying large items

Discussion questions:

1. What safe work procedures are in your workplace to prevent falls from elevation and is training offered on those procedures?
2. Does your workplace have appropriate fall arrest protection and procedures for workers?

More information:

If you have questions about preventing falls when working at heights, please contact:

Yukon Workers’ Compensation Health and Safety Board, 867-667-5450 or 1-800-661-0443 or [worksafe@gov.yk.ca](mailto:worksafe@gov.yk.ca)

Safety Talk record:

Print and complete this page or fill in electronically, then save as a record of your Safety Talk.

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