

## **PREVENTING FALLS**

According to the National Safety Council's 2018 Accident Facts, the top two leading causes of work-related injuries are **overexertion** (such as lifting, pushing, turning, holding, carrying, or throwing) and **slips, trips and falls**, making up **58%** of all occupational injuries involving days away from work in the US.

### **Where can FALLS occur?**

Slips, trips, and falls are of major concern for SU/SD's. They make up the majority of workers' compensation claims. With safety in mind, they may be eliminated from the injury list. Falls may occur from:

- 1. Slips and trips from housekeeping concerns**
- 2. Ladders**
- 3. Elevated surfaces, runways, and scaffolding**

### **How can we prevent these types of slips, trips, and falls?**

#### **1. Slips and trips from housekeeping concerns**

- Maintain a good standard of housekeeping.
- Promptly clean up liquid spills.
- Wet locations should be controlled.
- Ensure that staff and students wear appropriate footwear for the job.
- Doorways, aisles, stairways, and other walking or working surfaces shall be kept clear of trash, debris, tools, equipment, and other items, which may cause tripping or other accident hazards. All passageways, storerooms, service rooms, aisles, and working spaces should remain free from clutter.
- Protruding nails, splinters, holes or loose boards should be removed.
- Trash, debris, or other refuse will not be thrown or dropped from upper levels unless the area below is properly barricaded and adequate warnings are posted.
- Adequate number and size of refuse containers should be provided in the workspace.
- Rags, shop cloths, disposable towels, etc., contaminated with flammable or combustible liquids, or harmful chemicals should be stored in labeled metal containers equipped with a cover and discarded in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations.

*Reference: OSHA Standard for General Requirements Subpart D Walking and Working Surfaces 1920.22*



## FALLS (Cont.)

### 2. Ladders



- Use ladders with care.
- Ladders should be in good condition with sufficient size and strength to securely hold the weight of the load. Check for the specification label on the ladder. Commercial Type 1A, rated for 300 lbs. is recommended.
- They should be inspected prior to each use, and taken out of service if needed. Paint on a ladder hinders inspection.
- Ladders should be placed with a secure footing, or be held in position.
- The foot of a ladder should be used at such a pitch that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is one-quarter of the working length of the ladder.
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Short ladders should not be spliced together to make long ladders.
- Ladders should not be used in the horizontal position as scaffolds or work platforms.
- Use both hands when climbing or descending ladders. Don't carry objects.
- The top rung of a ladder should not be used as a seat or a step.
- Metal ladders shall never be used near electrical equipment.
- Fixed ladders should remain in good condition and be inspected regularly.
- Training should be provided to persons using ladders.
- Moveable ladders should never be moved while persons are on them. Moveable ladders should have a breaking/locking system for wheels and system should be activated when in use.
- Ladders should be secured during storage to prevent accidental tip over. Ideally, ladders should be stored horizontally on hooks between shoulder and knee height for ease of handling.

Reference:

*OSHA Standard for General Requirements Subpart D Walking and Working Surfaces 1910.25, 26, and 27. 1926.1050 Subpart X Stairways and Ladders*

## FALLS (Cont.)

### 3. Elevated surfaces, runways, and scaffolding

- **Open sided floors, platforms or runways** six feet or more above the adjacent floor or ground level should be guarded by a standard railing or some other approved fall protection system (i.e., safety net system, fall arrest system or other approved fall protection plan), except where there is an entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder.
  1. The guardrail systems should be constructed of wood, metal angle iron or other equivalent strength metal materials. They should withstand a minimum applied (from any direction) load of two hundred (200) pounds with minimal deflection.
  2. The guardrail system should consist of a top and intermediate rail, and upright supports spaced no less than eight (8) feet on center.
  3. The top rail should be forty-two (42) inches plus or minus three (3) inches from the floor or platform to the upper surface of the top rail. The intermediate railing should be midway between the floor or platform and the top edge of the guardrail system.
  4. The railing shall be provided with a **toe board** beneath the open sides, wherever:
    - ✓ Persons can pass,
    - ✓ There is moving machinery, or
    - ✓ There is equipment with which falling materials could create a hazard.
    - ✓ Care should be taken to ensure that tools, equipment and other objects are secure.
  5. Personal fall arrest systems are recommended for productions where performers or stage personnel are working at heights greater than six (6) feet.

\* Training should be provided to persons that may be exposed to fall hazards.

Reference:

*OSHA Standard for General Requirements Subpart D Walking and Working Surfaces 1910.22, 23, 24 and 1926.500 Subpart M Fall Protection*