



## PS Safety & Risk Management, LLC

*Providing Safety Solutions for Today's Needs*

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### **WORKING AT HEIGHTS**

Falls are a serious threat to your safety, and falls from heights are even more so.

You don't have to be climbing signal towers or washing windows on the 28th floor to be at risk from falls from heights. When you think about it, everyone works at heights sometimes.

Slips and trips are usually known as "falls from the same level", as opposed to "falls from another level". However, you can see that a slip or trip could cause a fall from another level if it made you to fall down the stairs or from a scaffold.

There is potential for falls from elevations in most workplaces - just about anyplace that there are steps or stairs, ladders, mezzanine storage areas or large vehicles. Some jobs regularly involve serious risks of falls from heights - maintaining towers, loading tank cars, monitoring large vessels, and of course painting and construction, to name a few.

For many workers, avoiding falls from heights is just a matter of using common sense and a few basic safety rules such as these:

- Never use a makeshift ladder or scaffold.
- Use handrails, and use caution when traveling on steps and stairways.
- Use ladders safely. Make sure a ladder is in good condition and is set on a firm stable base. Never stand on the top few rungs of a straight ladder or a step ladder. Don't carry loads on ladders - hoist them instead. And don't lean out from a ladder.
- When climbing in and out of high vehicle cabs, maintain "three point contact" at all times. That means having two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand firmly in contact with the vehicle at all times.
- Wear safe footwear to reduce chances of slipping and tripping.
- Don't let horseplay, inattention, or hurrying put you at risk when you are at heights, whether on a balcony, staircase or step-stool.

If your job involves working at heights in a serious way, you must use fall protection equipment. There may be a net below your work area, or a catch platform. You may have to use a personal lifeline system, which may consist of a body harness, a lanyard with a shock absorber, and a lifeline attached to an anchorage point. These devices may be part of a system to prevent you from stepping off the edge, or to catch you in case of a fall.

No matter what kind of fall arrest equipment is assigned to you, it is important that you understand fully its use – and its limitations. Know how to maintain it properly to prevent wear and damage.

Carefully follow all the procedures you learn in your training for anchoring and tying off fall protection equipment. Never improvise by substituting unapproved equipment or procedures.

Whether you are working on the loading dock, or working high off the ground in a lift, never forget that falls from heights are very often fatal. Use caution, common sense and the right Personal Protective Equipment.

For more information or training needs, contact **PS Safety & Risk Management, LLC** at (225) 716-0029 or visit us at [www.pssafety.net](http://www.pssafety.net)