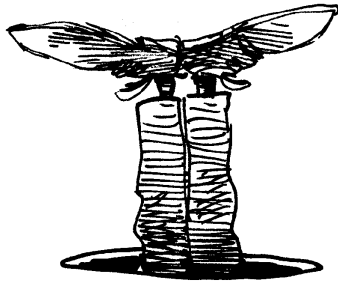


Floor and Wall Openings



To fully understand what type of hazards exist on most construction sites, you need a good handle on OSHA's 1926 Standards for the Construction Industry. One very important Standard addresses "Fall Protection," and provides hundreds of safety tips to safeguard you. Avoid those falls!

OSHA's Subpart 'M' Fall Protection

OSHA's **Fall Protection Standard (1926 Construction Standards....Subpart M)** deals with the various "fall protection systems" that are available to all workers on a jobsite.

This **Fall Protection Standard** also addresses the "parts" of a total fall protection standard (i.e., ladders, lanyards, safety harnesses, lifelines, perimeter guarding, toe boards, walkways, railings, floor and wall openings, etc.).

Definitions to know from Subpart "M":

Body Harness--Means straps which may be secured about the employee in a manner that will distribute the fall arrest forces over at least the thighs, pelvis, waist, chest and shoulders with means for attaching it to other components of a personal fall arrest system.

Controlled Access Zone--Means an area in which certain work may take place without the use of guardrail systems....and access to the zone is controlled/restricted.

Hole--Means a gap or void of 2 inches or more in the floor, roof, or other walking/working surface.

Lanyard--Means a flexible line or rope, wire rope, or strap which generally has a connector at each end for connecting the body harness to the deceleration device, lifeline or anchorage.

Leading Edge--Means the edge of a floor, roof, or other walking/working surface.

Opening--Means a gap or void 30 inches or more high, and 18 inches or more wide, through which employees can fall to a lower level.

Warning Line System--Means a barrier erected on a roof to warn employees that they are approaching an unprotected roof side or edge.

Wall & Floor Openings

A **vital part of any Safety Talk** on fall protection involves the correct way to protect a worker from dangers associated with unguarded floor and wall openings.

The **standard guardrail system** required by OSHA involves a two-rail system, installed in a horizontal manner. The top-rail is installed over the wall or floor opening at a 42-inch height, and the mid-rail

is installed at the 21-inch level. And maybe a toe board system as well.

If you're building a walkway over a trench line, or possibly over an unguarded shaft, pit, tunnel, vault, manhole or other type of opening, OSHA also requires you to construct a guardrail system, using the same measurements as that shown in the above paragraph (one horizontal rail at the 42-inch level, and the other at the 21-inch level).

What about your jobsite trailer, or storage shed? Is the rise to the trailer entrance 30-inches or more? If so, you must build a set of steps, and place a guardrail system (top-rail and mid-rail) on both sides of the steps.

If the trailer or storage shed opens outward, then you must also build a platform that measures the radius of the swing of the door, plus an additional 18 inches. Thus, with a three-foot wide door, the platform would measure a minimum of 54-inches wide and deep.

Safety guidelines on your jobsites are for your protection. Rigidly follow each and every one of them, and you'll "have a safe day" every day, on construction sites. Take good care of yourself.