

OHBA Safety Pages: Fall Protection

Falls are the leading cause of death in construction. Oregon OSHA has several rules for construction activities that specify the minimum height at which workers must be protected from falling. These heights are known as “trigger heights.” Beginning January 1, 2017 Oregon OSHA changed the trigger height in the general fall protection rule in construction from 10 feet to 6 feet.

Slide Guards: Oregon-OSHA Fall Protection Rules prohibited the use of slide guards (AKA – toe boards) as the only or primary method of fall protection starting October 1, 2017. Employers may continue to use Slide Guards as part of their fall protection measures however, they will need to utilize additional methods to comply with this new rule. Examples would be personal fall-arrest or restraint systems, positioning device systems, guardrails, safety nets, warning lines, catch platforms, etc. Please check in with your Competent or Qualified person for additional information.

Training Program - The employer is to provide training for each employee who might be exposed to fall hazards such that each employee can recognize the hazards of falling and knows the procedures to be followed to minimize or eliminate these hazards. The employer’s competent person shall train each employee, as necessary, in the nature of fall hazards in the work area; the correct procedures for erecting, maintaining, disassembling, and inspecting the fall protection systems to be used; the use and operation of guardrail systems, personal fall arrest systems, safety net systems, warning line systems, safety monitoring systems, personal fall restraint systems, slide guard systems, positioning devices, and other protection to be used; the role of each employee in the safety monitoring system if/when this system is used; the limitations on the use of mechanical equipment during the performance of roofing work; the correct procedures for the handling and storage of equipment and materials and the erection of overhead protection; and the role of employees in the fall protection work plan.

The employer is to verify that each employee has been trained by keeping a **written certification record** containing the name of the employee trained, training date(s), and the signature of the person who conducted the training or the signature of the employer. If the employer relies on training conducted by another employer, the certification record shall indicate the date the employer determined the prior training was adequate rather than the date of actual training.

Other Situations: Although roof work is perhaps the most frequent and obvious situation in which fall protection is needed, there are other times when fall protection is required:

Top plates: (Walking/Working surface) When over 6 feet in height (either to the inside floor or outside ground level), you must use a positive means of fall protection.

Layout, nailing, tilting and bracing of walls: You are allowed a “floor” (not to exceed 6 feet in height) if the work is done to the leading edge . . . the edge of the floor from which the walls are being built, tilted, or braced. Harness-type protection is required for workers involved in the construction process on top of the beams (i.e., safety harness, lanyard, static lines, catch platforms, etc.).

Open-sided floors, platforms, or stairway landings: Must have standard guardrails when 6 feet or higher.

Guardrails need a top rail, midrail, toe boards and posts. The top rail should be 42 inches, plus or minus 3 inches, above the walking/working level; the midrail should be 21 inches. Posts should be of at least 2” x 4” stock with spaces not to exceed 8 feet. The top rail should also be of at least 2’ x 4” stock, and the midrail should be at least 1 x 6 stock. If toe board is used it should be a minimum of 3.5” in height. Guardrails need to be able to withstand a minimum 200-pound deflection throughout the system horizontally.

Wall openings: Each employee working on, at, above, or near wall openings (including those with chutes attached) where the inside bottom edge of the wall opening is less than 39 inches above the walking/working surface and the outside bottom edge of the wall opening is six feet or more above lower levels, must be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, personal fall arrest systems, or personal fall restraint systems. A simple method to protect employees from falling through such wall openings is to use available framing material as a guardrail that is capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 200 pounds in any outward or downward direction, at any point along the top edge. The top edge height of the top rail must be 42 inches (plus or minus three inches) to the walking/working surface. If the bottom edge of the wall opening is less than 21 inches from the walking/working surface, a midrail must also be installed. An opening means a gap or void 30 inches or more high and 18 inches or more wide, in a wall or partition, through which employees can fall to a lower level.

Floor openings and holes: Must either be protected with standard guardrails or be capable of supporting, without failure, at least twice the weight of employees, equipment, and materials that may be imposed on the cover at any one time. Examples you might find on your jobsite may include HVAC, chimney, or skylight openings.

Runways and ramps: Must have guardrails whenever they are used at 4 feet or more above ground level.



The information we provide is not intended to include all possible safety measures and controls. In addition, the safety information we provide does not relieve the Members of its own duties and obligations with regard to safety concerns, nor does Oregon Home Builders Association guarantee to the Members or others that the Member’s property, job sites and/or operations are safe, healthful, or in compliance with applicable laws, regulations or standards. The Members remain responsible for their own operations, safety practices and procedures and should consult with legal counsel as they deem appropriate.

Employer: _____ Project: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Shift: _____

Number in crew: _____ Number attending: _____

Safety or Health issues discussed. Include recent accident investigations and hazards involving tools, equipment, the work environment, work practices and any Safety or Health recommendations:

Follow up on recommendations from last safety meeting:

Record of those attending:

Name: (please print)	Signature:	Company:
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

Supervisor's remarks: _____

Supervisor: _____ (Print) _____ (Signature)