



Falling objects can be tools, equipment, debris, or construction materials. Objects falling from above and striking people below cause some of the most serious industrial injuries and account for many fatalities every year.

Let's look at the problem of how to prevent falling objects. First, is there work being performed overhead? How can accidents be prevented?

Common Falling Objects

When you think about objects falling and causing a fatality or injury to people below, you think about the larger material or tools. But that is not how it works. Many times, injuries and fatalities can be caused by the simplest hand tool or small object. It all depends on where, how, and the pace at which the object hits someone.

Some common dropped objects that have been known to cause harm include:

- Drills and bits
- Screwdrivers and screws
- Hammers and nails
- Scaffolds
- Paint cans
- Ladders
- Boards
- Power tools
- Saws

- Personal items on the worker
- Personal drinks or cups of the workers

Here are some basic precautions to be followed:

- PPE is one of the most important things that you can do to help prevent injuries. It is very important to always wear safety protection and hard hats when you are in a construction zone with people working above you. Certain areas may require more PPE than others, but this is the most basic protection.
- Warn those below that you're about to begin an overhead task by signs, barricades, and communications.
- Don't carry tools or materials up a ladder. Use a hand line, containers, or buckets lifted by a line.
- Before raising tools or materials with a hand line, make sure they are securely fastened so they won't slip out.
- When you pile materials on scaffolds, make sure scaffolding and platforms are provided with toe boards so objects don't fall off.
- Never throw materials or tools.
- Make sure the load being lifted by hand line or scaffold is balanced and that no one is under the load being lifted.
- Keep tools and materials away from the edges of platforms and ladders and off railings or windowsills.
- Don't put tools in your pockets because, when you bend over or reach, they may fall out.
- Practice good housekeeping on the overhead job and keep tools and materials that are not in use picked up and stored properly.
- If the nature of the overhead job involves the danger of falling objects, have the area below cleared, post the necessary warning signs, and rope off the area.

- Never leave tools that are not needed laying around. This is just setting a stage for items to be kicked or pushed off. When workers are finished with the tools and materials that they are using, they should be properly stored and put away.

Take a moment and look for these types of hazards and correct them before you or a coworker gets hurt.