



Primary fall hazards in construction include unprotected roof edges, improper scaffold construction, and unsafe portable ladders, which account for 34% of deaths and 100 annually due to preventable falls.

Employers must plan projects for safety when working from heights. This includes determining the job's nature, tasks, and necessary safety equipment. Employers should use a Fall Protection Work Plan and ensure all necessary equipment and tools are available at the construction site.

When is Fall Protection Required?

Falls can occur at any height. The Washington Department of Labor & Industries has defined three primary "trigger heights" related to construction work where protective measures must be taken to prevent falls. The three primary trigger heights for construction activities are:

Always Protect

- Working above or adjacent to dangerous equipment.
- Holes into which a worker can trip, step into, or step through.
- Falling into or onto impalement hazards (e.g., exposed rebar or stakes).

At Four Feet or More

- When on a walking/working surface.

- Ramps, runways, and inclined walkways.
- Holes where work is being performed.
- Skylights.
- Hatchways & chute holes.
- Pits and trap door holes.
- Ladderways.
- Repair pits and service pits.
- Manholes.
- Openings.
- Formwork and reinforcing work.
- Steep-pitch roof – regardless of task.
- Low-pitch roof – other than roofing work or constructing a leading edge.
- Hazardous slopes.
- Vehicles and rolling stock – if suitable anchorages cannot be provided or create a greater hazard.
- Window cleaning.
- Working on a roof or other elevated working area.

At Six Feet or More

- Roofing work on low-pitch roofs.
- Constructing a leading edge.
- Cranes – non-assembly/disassembly work.
- Tower cranes – Work other than erecting, climbing, and dismantling.

At Ten Feet (Using a Fall Protection Work Plan)

- Engaged in the erection or placement of structural members.

- Engaged in excavation or trenching operations.
- Working on scaffolding.
- Cranes – assembly/disassembly work.
- Tower cranes – Erecting, climbing, and dismantling.

Regardless of Height

- Vehicle-mounted aerial devices.
- Manually propelled and self-propelled elevating work platforms,
- Boom supported elevating work platforms.