

SAFETY ALERT

Fall Protection: Keeping Employees Safe When Working at Heights

USOSHA has released the Top 10 Most Often Cited Standards and Top 10 Standards with the Highest Assessed Penalties for fiscal year 2009 (October 1, 2008 through September 30, 2009). Let's take a look at each one.

Top 10 Most Cited Standards:

1. Scaffolding, General Requirements, Construction
2. Fall Protection, Construction
3. Hazard Communication, General Industry
4. Respiratory Protection, General Industry
5. Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout), General Industry
6. Ladders, Construction
7. Powered Industrial Trucks, General Industry
8. Electrical, Wiring Methods, General Industry
9. Electrical System Design, General Requirements, General Industry
10. Fall Protection, Training Requirements, Construction Industry
2. Scaffolding, General Requirements, Construction
3. Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout), General Industry
4. Excavations, Protective Systems, Construction
5. Machines, General Requirements, General Industry
6. General Duty Clause
7. Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemical
8. Ladders, Construction
9. Powered Industrial Trucks, General Industry
10. Aerial Lifts, Construction

Top 10 Standards with the Highest Assessed Penalties:

1. Fall Protection, Construction

Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries, 13% of all fatal work related injuries are due to falls with 680 workers killed in 2008.

Keeping workers safe from falls starts with knowing the applicable USOSHA safety and health requirements; if you are working with Vehicle-Mounted Elevating and Rotating Work Platforms the standard is *USOSHA 29 CFR 1910.67*, for work on construction sites and roofs, its *USOSHA 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M Fall Protection*, and if you are using an aerial lift, bucket truck or platform lift the standard is *USOSHA 29 CFR 1926.453*.

Besides knowing the regulations, you need to know what type of fall protection is best for your workers and the difference between fall arrest and fall restraint. According to the *ANSI/ASSE Z359-2007 Fall Protection Code*, fall arrest is the

While many of these standards are on the lists year to year, several new ones appear this time around; Fall Protection, Training Requirements, Construction Industry, and Aerial Lifts, Construction. According to the United States Department of Labor 2008

action or event of stopping a free fall or the instant where the downward free fall has been stopped. Fall arrest systems with harnesses and energy absorbing lanyards may be best used when working heights exceed 20' with no objects or obstacles below the worker that could harm or injury if struck. Fall restraint is the securing of the worker to an anchorage with a lanyard short enough to prevent a free fall by keeping the worker's center of gravity from reaching the fall hazard. For aerial lifts, bucket trucks and platform lifts, fall restraint is often the best choice.

Once you have decided on the fall protection, you need to purchase the harnesses, lanyards and other equipment. Be sure whatever you buy meets the requirements of the *ANSI/ASSE Z359-2007 Fall Protection Code*. Along with getting the equipment, preparing a fall protection plan with specific procedures for using the harnesses and lanyards, inspection and maintenance, jobsite inspections, and safety training is a good idea. Fall protection training should include classroom and hands-on training with a qualified instructor.

Keeping workers safe from falls is a team effort. The tools for fall protection know the safety and health requirements, choosing the right fall protection, having a fall protection plan and being sure workers are using the equipment correctly all the time.

For more information, visit osha.gov or contact Robert Holwitt of BSG at 856.252.1400 x6714 or rholwitt@birdsall.com.

