

Hazard Alert – Fall from heights

Working from heights is inherently dangerous. Fall protection systems must be used to prevent serious injury or death. Such systems may include fall arrest, guardrails, warning lines, travel restraints and properly secured flooring underfoot.

Hazard summary

A worker was fatally injured after falling from the top floor of a high-rise building to the concrete sidewalk below. The worker stepped onto unsecured floor boards that gave way, causing them to fall. Fall arrest was not used and the site was not properly guarded or delineated at the time of the accident.

Contributing factors

- Floor boards were not properly secured to the surface below to prevent movement.
- The worksite did not have warning lines or control zones established to warn or prevent workers from entering an area with fall hazards.
- The worker was not wearing fall arrest equipment.
- Appropriate anchorage points were not established.
- Guardrails were incomplete.
- The worksite was not properly assessed to identify fall hazards.

Recommended precautions

- Hazard assessments must be completed to identify and control hazards that may exist at the worksite.
- Temporary flooring shall be securely fastened to prevent lateral and upward movement.
- Holes or pits in a floor, roof, walkway or work area must be identified, covered and secured to prevent injuries or falls.
- A fall protection plan and rescue plan must be completed, outlining the methods of fall protection to be used, and means of rescue suitable for the circumstances (location, type of fall protection, training, etc.).
- Workers using fall protection must complete a two-day fall protection training course as prescribed by WorkplaceNL, and have a valid certificate.
- Fall arrest systems must be securely attached to a suitable anchorage point.
- There must be a sufficient number of anchorages for the number of workers, and for the location of the work to be completed.
- Guardrails must be complete, without gaps and secured against movement. Guardrails must also include a top rail, intermediate rail and toe boards.
- Work areas below overhead work must be protected from falling objects.