

MBAA Safety Tool Box Talk



Fall Protection

Overview

Falls from heights are one of the most dangerous and serious types of workplace injuries. Falls from heights are also one of the most common and potentially preventable types of workplace injuries. There can be multiple fall hazards in breweries ranging from climbing ladders to accessing the top of tanks. Care must be given to ensure employees are protected from falls by the use of fall protection or prevention, and proper safety training.

Trigger Height

For general industry, some type of fall protection or prevention is required when working 4 ft. or more above the next lower level. This includes all open-sided floors, platform runways, and wall openings. However, there are some exceptions that may have different trigger heights for construction, fixed ladders, working above dangerous equipment, and scaffolding.

Types of Fall Protection

In general, fall protection should complete one of the following 2 functions:

- 1) Prevent or restrain a worker from falling (i.e., Fall Prevention).
- 2) Stop or arrest a worker who falls (i.e., Fall Protection).

Guardrails

In general, guardrails with a top rail, mid rail, and toeboard must be provided around every open-sided working surface that is 4 ft. or higher off the ground or next level.

Floor Openings and Holes

All floor holes and openings must be guarded or covered, regardless of fall distance. Guards can include using a

railing and toeboard or a floor hole cover.

Stairways

There are various specific requirements for stairways, but in general if a stairway has 4 or more risers, it must have standard stair railings or handrails as follows:

- Have at least 1 handrail (preferably right-side descending) if both sides enclosed;
- Have at least 1 stair railing on open side if 1 side is open; or
- Have 1 stair railing on each side if both sides open.

Ladders

If reaching to a high work area, a ladder may be used but first always determine if a ladder is the best method for reaching the higher work area.

If a ladder is used, always use the right ladder for the job, ensuring it is tall enough to reach the work area without standing on the top rung. Always extend ladders 3 ft. above the landing point. Place ladders on stable and level ground and secure the base of the ladder. Always wear proper footwear on ladders and maintain 3 points of contact with the ladder at all times. Safety devices such as a cage or other suitable sliding fall protection device must be provided for all fixed ladders that are more than 20 feet high to a maximum unbroken length of 30 feet.

Preventing Falls

The following simple steps may be used to help prevent falls in your workplace:

- 1) Analyze work areas for fall hazards: Determine hazard areas and hazardous jobs/activities.
- 2) Eliminate need for fall protection: If needed, determine methods for

eliminating fall hazards by either engineering and/or administrative controls.

- 3) **Select appropriate type of fall protection:** Determine which type of fall protection will work best for the area and tasks.
- 4) **Develop rescue and/or retrieval procedures:** Ensure there is a process in place to rescue employees in case of a fall or assure employees can rescue themselves.
- 5) **Develop an equipment inspection, maintenance and storage program:** Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations for storing, inspecting, and maintaining fall protection equipment. This includes, but is not limited to harnesses, lanyards, and other types of connectors.
- 6) **Training:** Ensure employees are trained on fall protection hazards and procedures for minimizing or eliminating the hazards.

LINKS

Much of the information provided in this document is generalized as OSHA has very specific requirements related to fall protection. Please refer to the links below or ask the MBAA Brewery Safety Committee for additional information as needed.

- [OSHA's Safety and Health Topics on Fall Protection](#)
- [OSHA Quick Card – Fall Protection in General Industry](#)
- [OSHA Document – Falling Off Ladders Can Kill: Use Them Safely](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BREWERY SAFETY PROGRAMS, PLEASE VISIT THE MBAA SAFETY WEBSITE AT:

www.mbaa.com/brewresources