

## May 4 – 8, 2026 is National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls Week.



Fatalities caused by falls from elevation continue to be a leading cause of death for construction employees, accounting for 389 of the 1,034 construction fatalities recorded in 2023 (BLS data). **Those deaths were preventable.** The National Safety Stand-Down raises fall hazard awareness across the country in an effort to stop fall fatalities and injuries.

### What is a Safety Stand-Down?

A Safety Stand-Down is a voluntary event for employers to talk directly to employees about safety. Any workplace can hold a stand-down by taking a break to focus on "Fall Hazards" and reinforcing the importance of "Fall Prevention". Employers of companies not exposed to fall **(continued on page 2)**

## Suicide Prevention in the Construction Industry



Suicide prevention in the construction industry is a critical and urgent issue. Construction workers face one of the highest suicide rates of any profession, driven by factors such as jobsite stress, chronic pain, substance misuse, financial pressures, long work hours, and stigma surrounding mental health. Depression, anxiety, and untreated mental health challenges can quietly affect workers at every level — from apprentices to executives — putting individuals, families, and projects at risk.

The good news is that suicide in construction is preventable. This page provides evidence-based resources, practical tools, and awareness strategies to help employers, supervisors, and coworkers recognize the warning signs of suicide, respond appropriately, and create a jobsite culture where it is safe to speak up and seek help. You'll find guidance on identifying behavioral changes, starting supportive conversations, connecting workers to crisis resources such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, and implementing workplace suicide prevention programs tailored to the construction workforce.

Addressing suicide risk in construction requires leadership, education, and a commitment to reducing stigma around mental health. By integrating suicide prevention strategies into safety programs, toolbox talks, and employee wellness initiatives, organizations can protect their workforce, strengthen psychological safety, and build a culture where mental health is treated with the same seriousness as physical safety.

If you need to talk, the 988 Lifeline is here. At the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, we understand that life's challenges can sometimes be difficult. Whether you're facing mental health struggles, here emotional distress, alcohol or drug use concerns, or just need someone to talk to, our caring counselors are here for you. You are not alone.

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(continued from page 1) hazards, can also use this opportunity to have a conversation with employees about the other job hazards they face, protective methods, and the company's safety policies and goals. It can also be an opportunity for employees to talk to management about fall and other job hazards they see.

## 5 Ways to Prevent Workplace Falls

1. If you're working at 6 feet or more use fall protection.
2. Before starting a job make a fall protection plan.
3. Provide workers with the right equipment for the job.
4. Train everyone to use and properly wear the equipment safely.
5. Inspect your harness, lanyard and anchorage point before each use.

## Guardrail Safety

Nearly all construction sites have unprotected sides and edges, wall openings or floor holes at some point, which pose a hazard to the workers moving around the jobsite. These openings and sides must be protected with guardrails or covers.

### Common Causes of Injury:

- Leading edges.
- Stairwell openings in the floor and stair landings.
- Open-sided balconies, platforms, and lofts.
- Completed decks and porches.
- Low-silled windows less than 39 inches.
- Roof skylight openings.
- Ramps or runways.

### Safe Work Practices

- Guardrails must always be installed around openings in floors, and across openings of walls and windows greater than 18 inches, when the work area is 6 feet or more above a lower level.
- For window openings with a 6 ft. fall hazard, guardrails must be installed if the bottom sill height is less than 39 in. (1.1 m).
- A complete guardrail system consists of: 1) a top rail; 2) a midrail; and 3) a toeboard.
- Install top rails at 42 inches high, with midrails placed halfway between the top of the guardrail top rail and the floor or walking/working surface.
- Install toeboards a minimum of 4 inches along the edge of the walking or working surface to

protect from falling debris and objects, such as tools or materials.

- Any stairway with four or more risers or a height of more than 30 inches must be protected by a guardrail system, also known as stair rails.
- Any two inch or greater opening in the floor must be protected and covered.

## Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Determine what safety equipment is needed.
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment.
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job.
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment.
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather.
- Use the correct tool for the job and use it properly.
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open.
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder.
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface.
- A straight or extension ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it rests on for every 4 feet of height and extend at least 3 feet over the top edge.
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top.
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder and have someone support the bottom.
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use.

## Notes From the Editor

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