



Loss Control Safety Techniques



Falling From Heights

Loss Control Safety Bulletin – Falling from heights

Throughout the past several years, reports have indicated falling from heights to be the number one cause of workplace fatalities in the United States. In 2008, nearly one of three workers killed on the job was the result of such a fall. Sadly, many of these incidents could have been prevented.

A number of factors contribute to these accidents:

> **Unsafe Work Procedures** – The lack of proper “safe work” procedures and implementation of such protocols have been cited as major contributory factors in all types of falls. Individuals working at heights were exposed to risks which could have been avoided had safe work procedures been adhered to.

> **Individual Fall Arrest System** – The failure to provide a Fall Arrest System (safety harness) or the improper use of such a system is another factor in major fall from heights accidents. Additionally, workers frequently:

- Do not use their personal protective equipment
- Do not follow safe work or in-house rules and regulations
- Use uncertified equipment or misuse certified equipment
- Take shortcuts toward completing a process

These behaviors have been largely attributed to the workers’ lack of knowledge of the inherent dangers in their tasks or at their workplace, and the safe and proper manner to carry out their tasks.

> **Poor Work Environment** – Unsafe work conditions, equipment or structures, such as unstable scaffolding, contributed to a significant number of falls from heights cases. Unsatisfactory work conditions such as inadequate lighting, lack of hazard warnings and poor housekeeping are also common causes of accidents.

> **Improper Fall Prevention System** – In many cases, falls from height have been attributed to the absence of or improper use of fall prevention/protection systems – guard railing, scaffold, and cover for openings.

Steps You Can Take

Management must be proactive in implementing sound safety and health systems and protocols. This includes proper risk assessments and incident reporting systems, providing adequate resources, and ensuring that such information is disseminated to employees and other persons exposed to risks. Specifically, Management may consider these steps:

- Conduct risk assessments to identify any unsafe work practices
- Develop and convey safe work procedures to all workers
- Form a safety committee to overlook the overall safety of a worksite
- Conduct site assessments to ensure worksite conditions are suitable for work
- Train workers on the proper use of the individual fall arrest system
- Take immediate action to correct any undesirable behavior observed on the worksite

Worksite safety is critical in ensuring accidents and incidents such as those reported above do not cause hardship for your own organization. Be safe. Take note of the topics and recommendations discussed in this bulletin. We encourage you to put them into practice – doing so helps ensure your safety. It is the philosophy of Frankenmuth Insurance and your Independent Insurance Agent to provide services that give policyholders peace of mind. At Frankenmuth Insurance, we truly are with you all the way.

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