

Avoiding OSHA's Fatal Four: 6 fall prevention tips for contractors.



Working in construction is a dangerous business. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) uses a term called the Fatal Four to describe the top four causes of fatalities and injuries on the jobsite. And at the very top of that list ... is falls. With a reported 351 deaths in 2020 alone, falls remain the number one cause of fatalities in construction.

That's why it's your responsibility as a contractor or construction worker to know the risks and promote safety first. Follow these six fall prevention tips:

1. **Create a construction fall plan.** Every worksite is different, which means every construction fall plan will be unique. Not only is it a safe practice to implement fall safety plans, it's actually required to use fall protection in many instances. OSHA requires fall protection whenever someone is working near unprotected sides that are six feet above ground, when they're working at an excavation site with work six feet below ground, and during roofing activities six feet above ground. To help make a safe and proper plan, OSHA offers sample plans on its website. Review them and implement steps to help prevent falls.
2. **Plan ahead before every job.** Ensure adequate safety equipment is included in your costs when estimating or quoting a job, especially for projects on elevated or underground spaces. Then, look over the upcoming job and divide tasks beforehand. This will help create an understanding of expectations among team members and will ensure all safety measures are addressed before starting the job. Once on the site, check that all team members are familiar with the workspace and their exact duties so there are no surprises when you start to work.
3. **Prep your worksite.** Verify the site is safe before starting any construction. Put guard rails and toe boards on every open-sided platform. Guard every hole that could be a fall risk for your employees. Set a standard to maintain a clean worksite at all times and encourage your

team to speak up and be proactive about any messy or unsafe surfaces they see.

4. **Provide the correct equipment.** Choosing the right materials for each project is essential as needs and risks can change from job to job. Get the proper scaffolding, ladders, harnesses, personal protection equipment (PPE), and safety gear for the team, especially those working six feet or higher off the ground.
5. **Train all employees.** Having the correct equipment increases safety, but your workers need to understand how to use it properly, too. PPE is effective when it's used correctly, so be sure your staff gets the right training on the use and maintenance of these items. Implement a code of conduct on the jobsite that promotes safe behavior and interactions among the team. Review these nine construction crew safety tips with every team member.
6. **Conduct daily walkthroughs.** Before each workday, have at least one person walk through the site and inspect it thoroughly. They can use this time to identify hazards, especially fall hazards, inspect the condition of equipment, and remove debris left from the day prior. This simple daily task can exponentially improve safety on the job.

Protect your team against one of OSHA's Fatal Four dangers with these fall prevention tips. Then, add even more protection with contractors insurance for your business. Talk to a local, independent agent about the coverage today.