Height Hazard: Fall Protection Beyond the Roof Meeting Kit



WHAT’S AT STAKE

Working at height isn’t limited to rooftops — it includes ladders, scaffolds, lifts, platforms, mezzanines, and any elevated surface where a worker can fall far enough to be seriously hurt. Even short heights can cause fractures, head injuries, or long recoveries when fall protection isn’t used correctly.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Fall hazards don’t just exist on rooftops — they’re everywhere. Ladders, scaffolds, lifts, platforms, open edges, and unfinished structures all create moments where one slip or misstep can lead to a life-changing injury.

Hidden Hazards at Everyday Heights

Falls from 4 to 10 feet cause thousands of injuries every year. Short heights feel “safe,” which is why workers take shortcuts — climbing without tying off, skipping guardrails, or overreaching from ladders. These smaller elevations create a false sense of security but carry very real risk.

Unstable or Changing Surfaces — Construction and maintenance environments change constantly.

- Loose boards or shifting planks
- Wet, dusty, or slippery surfaces
- Weak edges or unfinished platforms
- Tools or materials creating trip points

Incorrect or Missing Fall Protection

Harnesses, lanyards, rails, and anchors save lives — but only when they’re used correctly. Workers who don’t tie off, use the wrong anchor point, or don’t inspect their gear are at a much higher risk of serious injury.

Overreaching, Rushing, and Working Alone

Trying to grab something just out of reach, climbing “for a second,” or working without someone nearby increases the chance that a small mistake turns into a severe fall. Many fall incidents happen when workers rush to finish a task or skip a step, they know they should take.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Working at height safely means respecting every elevated surface – not just roofs. Falls happen fast, and most occur during routine tasks where workers feel confident, rushed, or distracted. Protecting yourself means using the right equipment and never putting yourself in a position where one misstep can take you over an edge.

Use Fall Protection Every Single Time

Tie off before you step up, not after. Harnesses, lanyards, anchors, rails, and covers only work when they’re used consistently and inspected before each shift. Never assume “it’s only a quick job” – quick jobs lead to most fall-related injuries.

Choose Stable, Properly Set-Up Equipment

Scaffolds, ladders, lifts, and platforms need solid footing, level surfaces, and proper assembly. If something looks unstable, uneven, or poorly supported, stop and fix it. A secure setup is your first line of defense against falls.

What to Do to Reduce Fall Risk on the Job

- Keep edges protected with guardrails or warning lines.
- Use proper anchor points rated for fall arrest.
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing ladders.
- Keep walkways, platforms, and ladders free of tools or debris.
- Avoid overreaching – move the ladder or reposition the lift instead.
- Stay aware of loose boards, slippery conditions, or shifting materials.

Slow Down and Pay Attention to Changing Conditions

Construction and maintenance environments change constantly. Weather, wet materials, new openings, or rearranged equipment can turn a safe surface into a fall hazard within minutes. Taking a moment to reassess your surroundings can prevent a serious injury.

Never Work Alone at Height

A second set of eyes can spot hazards you miss and call for help if something goes wrong. Having someone nearby isn’t just safer – in many situations, it’s required.

FINAL WORD

Working at height is never routine, no matter how familiar the task feels. Falls happen fast, often during simple moments. Respect every edge, every elevation, and every “quick job” – because fall protection only works when you use it every time.