Tool Box Talk
MARCH 27, 2023
Fall Protection

Falls are a leading cause of serious injuries and fatalities that occur in the workplace. According to statistics published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 5,333 fatal work falls in 2019. The construction industry in particular experiences a large number of fall injuries and fatalities. The BLS estimates that in 2019 there were 25,460 cases of lost-time injuries due to falls in the construction industry.

Unsafe Conditions that Lead to Falls:
Unguarded leading edges, open holes, improper guardrails, damaged equipment (ladders, stairs, safety equipment, etc.), slippery conditions, unmarked elevation changes.

Unsafe Actions that Lead to Falls
Working at heights without fall protection or fall prevention methods not in place, improper use of ladders, leaning over guardrails.

Best Practices to Avoid Falls in the Workplace:
The best way to avoid falls is by eliminating work tasks that require working at heights in the first place. Obviously, elimination is not always possible so the risk of falling must be mitigated through safeguards.

- Engineering controls such as physical barriers and guardrails are two fall prevention systems that are effective in preventing falls from heights.
- Using a proper fall arrest system such as a full-body harness, self-retracting lanyard, and approved anchor point with 100% tie-off is another way to prevent or mitigate the consequences of a fall.
- Proper use of ladders. This includes using three points of contact when climbing, not leaning to one side while on the ladder, setting the ladder at the proper angle, securing the ladder, etc.
- Proper housekeeping in work areas is important in preventing falls at the same level as well as falls from heights.
- Warning signs and other methods of communicating fall hazards to nearby workers.

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