Fall protection

For the start of the shift: when an edge needs fall protection, what to check on the harness and the anchor, and who is trained to use it.

DURATION
5 minutes

WHO LEADS IT
The supervisor or the safety lead, before the task

WHEN TO USE IT
At the start of a shift with work at height, or when the work area changes

WHAT TO BRING
A full-body harness, a lanyard and the task's job hazard analysis

Read it out loud

Good morning, everyone. Today's topic is falls, and it starts with a number: in general industry, OSHA requires fall protection when a walking-working surface has an unprotected side or edge 4 feet or more above a lower level.

That includes a mezzanine without guardrails, an open-sided platform on the line or a maintenance catwalk. It doesn't matter if the job takes two minutes.

Picture a scene that repeats. One bolt is missing to finish the job, the harness was left down below and someone decides to go up for just a minute without tying off. A fall doesn't wait for the minute to be over.

Before you go up, check your harness, its stitching, buckles and lanyard, and confirm that the anchor point was chosen for this and that the task was reviewed. Anything damaged comes out of service.

Anyone who uses a personal fall protection system is trained before being exposed, by a qualified person. Without that training, you stay on the ground.

There is work below too: barricade the area, don't leave loose tools up top and don't walk under someone who is working.

To wrap up: if conditions change, if there is no anchor or if something looks wrong, stop and tell your supervisor before you continue.

What OSHA says

- 29 CFR 1910.28(b)(1)(i) requires protection for each employee on a walking-working surface with an unprotected side or edge 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level.
- Before any employee is exposed to a fall hazard, the employer provides training (1910.30(a)(1)) given by a qualified person (1910.30(a)(2)). Personal fall protection systems are inspected before initial use during each workshift (1910.140(c)(18)).

Source: OSHA, 29 CFR 1910.28 (Duty to have fall protection), 1910.30 (Training requirements) and 1910.140 (Personal fall protection systems), current text. Reviewed on October 29, 2026.

Questions for the crew

1. **At what height does OSHA require fall protection in general industry?**
   Expected answer: At 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level, on any walking-working surface with an unprotected side or edge (1910.28(b)(1)(i)).
2. **What do you check on your harness before using it?**
   Expected answer: Stitching, webbing, buckles, D-rings and lanyard, looking for wear, damage, mildew or deterioration. Personal fall protection systems are inspected before initial use during each workshift, and defective components are removed from service (1910.140(c)(18)).
3. **Who can work with a personal fall protection system?**
   Expected answer: Someone trained by a qualified person before being exposed to the fall hazard (1910.30(a)(1) and (a)(2)), and retrained when the workplace or the equipment changes (1910.30(c)).

Sign-in sheet

Date _____ **Area** _____ **Led by** _____

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