



HEALTH ALERT

Directive to Protect Residential Construction Workers from Falls

As of June 16, 2011 residential construction employers will have to provide workers with the conventional fall protection (i.e., guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems such as body harnesses, lanyards and lifelines) required by the OSHA standards for fall protection in construction (29 CFR 1926.501).



An example of a Personal Fall Arrest System in use during reroofing job duties

According to OSHA, falls are the leading cause of death for workers in construction. In December 2010, OSHA issued a new directive requiring residential construction employers to use conventional fall protection for their workers, withdrawing an interim policy that allowed them to use alternative procedures for worker fall protection. Where residential construction employers find that conventional fall protection is not feasible or creates a greater hazard in residential environments, employers will still be allowed to implement alternative procedures that will assure worker protection, but will require that employers develop a written site-specific fall protection plan that specifies these alternative procedures. This directive will provide residential construction workers with greater protection from being injured or killed by falls on the job.

Since issuing the new directive, OSHA has developed a variety of training and compliance assistance materials in many formats that are available on OSHA's Residential Fall Protection web page www.osha.gov/doc/residential_fall_protection.html. The latest of these is an educational slide presentation (see link below) that describes methods for preventing injuries and deaths from falls, and explains techniques currently used by employers during various stages of construction. These techniques involve the use of conventional fall protection systems including safety nets, guardrails, and personal fall arrest systems such as body harnesses, lanyards and lifelines.

Should Residential Contractors need further assistance regarding this directive and/or other health and safety concerns, OSHA provides a free compliance assistance service for small businesses with fewer than 250 employees at any one facility, and no more than 500 employees nationwide. OSHA's on-site consultation services are separate from the agency's enforcement operations and do not result in penalties or citations.

Federal OSHA Offices for Private Contractors:

Bridgeport Area Office
Clark Building
1057 Broad Street, 4th Floor
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
(203) 579-5581
Fax: (203) 579-5516

Hartford Area Office
Federal Building
450 Main Street, Room 613
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
(860) 240-3152
Fax: (860) 240-3155

CONN-OSHA Consultation Services for Public or Private CT Employers:

- ◆ Call (860) 263-6900 or
- ◆ Write to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Labor, 38 Wolcott Hill Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109 or
- ◆ Submit an online consultation request form at <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/consult.htm>

Additional Information:

- ◆ Fall Protection in Residential Construction - www.osha.gov/SLTC/fallprotection/construction.html
- ◆ Protection Program Update - www.osha.gov/doc/residential_fall_protection.html