



029: Falling Objects

To prevent injuring someone

Rope off areas under elevated platforms, whenever practical. Note that a yellow barrier means “general caution,” while a red barrier means “do not enter.”

Ensure toeboards on scaffolding and lifts are sufficient to prevent objects from rolling off.

Tie off large tools, so if you drop them they won’t bounce off the platform and land on someone below.

If you are in a roped-in area, momentarily stop work when someone alerts you he or she is entering. Resume when danger to that person has passed.

Observe good housekeeping rules on work platforms. Keep them free of debris and free of tools and materials not needed for the job at hand.

Keep tools in a bucket or other high-sided container, so these are less likely to fall off the platform or be kicked off. Make sure the container has a low center of gravity. You may need to place a large fitting or two in the bottom to help ensure this. It also helps to place tools in that container in a “handle up” orientation.

Don’t make sudden foot movements when working overhead, to reduce the likelihood of kicking something over.

Never throwing a tool or other object to another person. If that person doesn’t catch what you throw, where will that object go?

If you are working on grating above another work area or traffic way, place plywood and plastic down to prevent a dropped object from falling onto people in the level(s) below.

Consider using netting around exposed perimeters.

To prevent being injured

Wear your hard hat as soon as you enter the job site. Objects can fall on you while you are walking through a construction area, even if your shift hasn’t started. Remember, objects can fall regardless of the time.

Give roped-off areas a wide berth unless your job requires entry. The rope is someone’s estimate of the safety boundary, as well as a signal that danger is present. Danger may extend beyond the boundary.

Before entering a roped-off area, make contact with people working in that area—alert them that you are entering the area. You may need to enter the area as part of the team, but don’t assume the falling objects know this.

If you are working on an intermediary platform, such as a scaffold with other scaffolding above it, ensure you have adequate protection above you. Your hard hat alone isn’t enough.

Never walk under a crane load. Not only might the load drop, but also the crane operator isn’t likely to see you and may become confused if he or she does.

Avoid walking under an opening in the floor above you.

Use caution before entering through a passageway where overhead work is being performed.

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Obtain small tools and objects common on your site. For example, obtain hole punches, hammers, wrenches, and sockets. Obtain a cardboard box and a glass bottle, jar, dinner plate, or coffee mug—but not an overly thick one. You may wish to experiment ahead of time. If your budget allows, go to the hardware store and buy a small glass pane, instead. You can set it on short 2x4s inside the box.

What this Safety Talk covers:

Practices for avoiding injury from falling objects, plus a demonstration session to illustrate.

Discussion notes :

