

HAZARD ALERT

EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HEIGHTS NEED FALL PROTECTION!

- *An employee lost her balance and fell from an eight-foot stepladder while stocking shelves. She was reaching to rearrange the stock, struck her knee on the shelf and fell. She suffered injuries to her back, neck and head.*
- *An employee suffered multiple injuries while installing decking. The worker wasn't wearing any kind of fall protection, and fell five metres to a concrete floor below. This person is now confined to a wheelchair for life.*
- *An employee died after falling from a suspended work platform. The victim was wearing a harness and lanyard, but hadn't tied into the fall-arrest system. He lost his balance and fell 30 meters, to his death.*

Many workers are killed or suffer serious injuries when working at heights. These accidents are often easily preventable, and many times, they happen because of a lack of planning or training, or the use of inappropriate equipment.

Safety rules and recommendations

If you can't eliminate the risk of falling by bringing the task down to ground level, or by eliminating the need for the task, you **must** use fall protection. Here are your choices:

First: The safest choice is to use guardrails. Guardrails remove the risk of falling by putting a barrier between workers and the edge.

Second: Travel restraint systems prevent falls by keeping employees from getting too close to the edge.

Last: Fall-arrest systems stop workers from hitting the surface below once they've fallen.

Note: Although the system will keep employees from striking the surface below, workers can still suffer injuries from the impact of falling into the system, and by remaining suspended until they are rescued.

If you do use a fall-arrest system, remember the following:

- The one-person anchor, and the structure to which it is attached, must be able to withstand 17.8 kN, equivalent to the weight of a small car.
- An employee who has fallen must be rescued quickly; a rescue plan must be developed in advance.
- Fall-arrest equipment must be removed from service and inspected by a competent person before it's returned to service.

Although not required by *Regulation 91-191*, the use of a full body harness and a shock absorber is highly recommended with fall-arrest systems. They significantly decrease the physical impact suffered by workers after they've fallen.

In New Brunswick, the law on fall protection can be found under sections 49-50, 95(2), 97-100, 102, 105-112, 121(2), 129.1(4-6), 129.3(2), 131(1), 141(1), 231(5) and 232(2) of *Regulation 91-191* of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

