

Fall protection: before you go up

Falls from height are among the most serious hazards on construction and industrial sites. Most are preventable when the system is chosen, inspected and used before work starts.

Key points

- In B.C. a fall protection system must be used when a fall of 3 m (10 ft) or more may occur, or when a shorter fall carries a greater risk of injury than landing on a flat surface.
- Where there are no permanent guardrails and a fall of 7.5 m (25 ft) or more may occur, a written fall protection plan must be available at the workplace before the work starts.
- Before you enter an area with a fall risk, you must be instructed in the fall protection system for that area. Ask if you have not been.
- Inspect your harness, lanyard and connectors before every use. Remove damaged equipment from service and report it.
- Tie off to an anchor that is rated for the load, and check that your lanyard length and the clearance below you work together.
- Know the rescue plan before you leave the ground: who calls, who reaches you, and how.

Ask the crew

- What is the highest point on today's job and how are we protected there?
- Where is the anchor and who confirmed it is suitable?
- If someone falls and is suspended, what is our rescue plan?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, s. 11.2 (when fall protection is required, and instruction in 11.2(6)) (Part 11 Fall Protection)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-11-fall-protection>

OHS Regulation, s. 11.3 (fall protection plan) (Part 11 Fall Protection)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-11-fall-protection>

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Sign-off sheet

Date: _____ Location: _____ Presented by: _____

Name (print)	Signature	Date

Ladder safety: set it up right

A ladder is a work platform of last resort. Most ladder incidents trace back to the set-up, not the ladder itself.

Key points

- Set the ladder on firm, level footing and make it long enough for the job.
- A non-self-supporting ladder should lean at about 75 degrees from horizontal (roughly one unit out for every four up).
- When the ladder is used to reach an upper landing it should extend about 1 m (3 ft) above that landing, and be secured so it cannot move.
- Do not carry heavy or bulky items up or down a ladder. Hoist them or use another method.
- If the work cannot be done safely from a ladder, use a work platform instead.
- Face the ladder and keep three points of contact (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand).

Ask the crew

- Is there a safer way to do this task than a ladder?
- Who checks the ladder for damage before use?
- Where will we secure it today?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 13.5 and 13.6 (portable ladders) (Part 13 Ladders, Scaffolds and Temporary Work Platforms)
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-13-ladders-scaffolds-and-temporary-work-platforms>

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Forklifts and pedestrians: sharing the floor

Pedestrians and lift trucks share space in most warehouses. A loaded truck cannot stop quickly or swerve, and the operator's view is often limited.

Key points

- Operators must inspect the lift truck before it is first operated on a shift and report defects. The employer keeps a defect record for at least 2 years.
- Pedestrians: use marked walkways, never walk under raised forks, and make eye contact with the operator before crossing a travel path.
- Operators: sound the horn at blind corners and doorways, slow down, and look in the direction of travel.
- Keep loads low and stable. A load that could shift and make the truck unstable must be restrained.
- Keep a clear distance from the truck. Do not stand between a truck and a fixed object such as a rack or wall.
- Only trained and authorized workers operate lift trucks. Operator training must meet Clause 6 of the CSA B335 standard cited in the Regulation.

Ask the crew

- Where do pedestrians and trucks cross on our site?
- Which corners or doors have poor visibility?
- Who is authorized to operate trucks on this shift?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, s. 16.3 (inspection before use) (Part 16 Mobile Equipment)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-16-mobile-equipment>

OHS Regulation, s. 16.43 (lift trucks, CSA B335) (Part 16 Mobile Equipment)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-16-mobile-equipment>

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Working in the heat: spot it early

Hot weather and hot work areas can overload the body's ability to cool down. Heat illness can progress from cramps to a medical emergency.

Key points

- In B.C. employers must assess heat stress where workers may be exposed, and put an exposure control plan in place.
- Cool potable water must be provided near the work area. Drink small amounts often, before you feel thirsty.
- Controls come in this order: engineering controls, then administrative controls (work-rest cycles, scheduling), then PPE.
- Early signs include heavy sweating, headache, dizziness, weakness, cramps and nausea. Stop, move to a cooler place and rest.
- A worker who is confused, stops sweating, has hot dry skin or collapses is in a medical emergency. Call 911.
- Watch co-workers too. People often do not recognize the signs in themselves.

Ask the crew

- Where is the cool water and shade for this job?
- Who is new or not yet used to the heat today?
- What is the plan if someone shows symptoms?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 7.27 to 7.32 (heat stress) (Part 7 Noise, Vibration, Radiation and Temperature)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-07-noise-vibration-radiation-and-temperature>

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Working in the cold: layers and limits

Cold, wind and wet clothing steal body heat quickly. Numb hands and slowed thinking also raise the risk of other injuries.

Key points

- In B.C. employers must assess cold stress where workers may be exposed, and put an exposure control plan in place.
- Dress in layers: a wicking base layer, an insulating middle layer and a wind- and water-resistant outer layer.
- Keep spare dry gloves, socks and a hat. Wet clothing loses most of its insulating value.
- Warning signs of hypothermia include shivering, clumsiness, slurred speech and confusion. Frostbite shows as numb, pale or waxy skin.
- Workers showing symptoms must be removed from the cold and treated. Get medical help for severe symptoms.
- Plan warm-up breaks and a warm place to take them, and take extra care on slippery surfaces and when handling cold metal.

Ask the crew

- Where can we warm up and dry out today?
- Who is working alone or in an exposed spot?
- Do we have spare dry clothing on site?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 7.33 to 7.38 (cold stress) (Part 7 Noise, Vibration, Radiation and Temperature)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-07-noise-vibration-radiation-and-temperature>

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Silica dust: what you can't see can hurt you

Cutting, grinding, drilling or crushing concrete, brick, stone and some other materials can release very fine dust that goes deep into the lungs. Long-term exposure can cause serious lung disease, including silicosis and lung cancer.

Key points

- Employers must assess the risk and have an exposure control plan where workers may be exposed to respirable crystalline silica.
- Controls come first at the source: wet cutting, tools with dust capture, enclosures and ventilation. A respirator is the last line, not the first.
- Workers must be instructed and trained in the hazards and in the controls for their task.
- Do not dry-sweep or use compressed air to clean off dust. Use wet methods or a suitable HEPA vacuum.
- Keep dusty work clothes out of your vehicle and home where practicable, and wash up before eating or drinking.
- If you wear a respirator, it must be the right type, fit-tested and used correctly.

Ask the crew

- Which tasks today make dust, and how are we controlling it at the source?
- Is the water supply or dust capture working on each tool?
- Who is fit-tested for the respirators on this job?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 6.110 to 6.115.1 (respirable crystalline silica), including 6.112.1 and 6.112.7 (Part 6 Substance Specific Requirements) <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-06-substance-specific-requirements>

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WHMIS labels: read before you use

Hazardous products must be identified so workers know the risks and the safe way to handle them. The label is the first thing you see and the SDS is the full detail.

Key points

- A supplier label on the original container shows the product identifier, hazard pictogram(s), signal word (Danger or Warning), hazard statements, precautionary statements and the supplier's identity. Supplier labels are bilingual (English and French).
- Do not remove or deface a supplier label. If it is lost or unreadable, tell your supervisor so it can be replaced.
- When a product is decanted into another container, that container needs a workplace label, with limited exceptions such as portable containers for immediate use.
- A workplace label shows the product name matching the SDS, safe handling information and a reference to the SDS.
- The Safety Data Sheet (SDS) must be readily available to workers. Know where the SDS binder or system is.
- If a product is not labelled, do not use it. Ask your supervisor.

Ask the crew

- Where are the SDSs kept for this area?
- Which containers here have been decanted and are they labelled?
- Can everyone name the pictograms on the products we use?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 5.8 to 5.10 (labels) and 5.14 to 5.16 (SDS) (Part 5 Chemical and Biological Substances)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-05-chemical-and-biological-substances>

Health Canada: WHMIS supplier requirements guidance

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/environmental-workplace-health/occupational-health-safety/workplace-hazardous-materials-information-system/supplier-hazard-communication-requirements-whmis/guidance.html>

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PPE: the last line of defence

PPE protects you when hazards cannot be eliminated or engineered out. It only works if it is the right type, fits, and is in good condition.

Key points

- Hierarchy of controls: eliminate or reduce the hazard first, then use PPE for what remains.
- Head and eye protection must meet the standards named in the Regulation (for example CSA Z94.1 or ANSI Z89.1 for head protection, and CSA Z94.3 or ANSI Z87.1 for eye protection).
- Inspect PPE before each use. Damaged items come out of service.
- PPE must fit and work with the other equipment you wear, such as glasses with a respirator, or a hard hat with hearing protection.
- Workers must be instructed in the correct use, limits and care of their PPE, and must use it as trained.
- Report broken or missing PPE right away. Do not improvise.

Ask the crew

- What hazard is each piece of PPE on this job protecting us from?
- Who checks PPE condition before the shift?
- Does anyone have PPE that doesn't fit?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, Part 8 (PPE), including s. 8.11 head protection and s. 8.14 eye protection (Part 8 Personal Protective Clothing and Equipment) <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-08-personal-protective-clothing-and-equipment>

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Housekeeping: a clear floor is a safe floor

Slips, trips and falls on the same level, and objects falling from poorly stacked storage, are everyday injury causes in any workplace.

Key points

- Floors, ramps, stairs and walkways must be kept in good repair and free of slipping and tripping hazards.
- Waste, spills and refuse must not be allowed to build up into a hazard. Clean spills straight away or mark them until they are cleaned.
- Materials must be stacked or stored in a stable and secure way. Heavy items low, nothing leaning, nothing blocking exits or equipment.
- Keep cords, hoses and tools out of walkways.
- Keep aisles, exits, fire extinguishers and electrical panels clear.
- If you can't fix a hazard, mark it, report it, and keep others away until it is fixed.

Ask the crew

- What is the biggest tripping hazard in our area right now?
- Where do materials pile up on this job?
- Are all exits and extinguishers clear?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 4.39 to 4.43 (slipping and tripping, waste material, stacking materials) (Part 4 General Conditions)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-04-general-conditions>

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Lockout: control the energy

Unexpected start-up or release of stored energy can cause amputations, crushing and electrocution. Lockout is how we make sure it cannot happen while someone is working on the equipment.

Key points

- Where unexpected start-up or energy release could injure someone, the energy sources must be isolated and controlled.
- Written lockout procedures must be available to the workers who work on the equipment.
- Each worker applies their own personal lock, identifiable as theirs, and keeps control of the key.
- Verify the equipment is de-energized (try it) and stored energy is released before work starts.
- Only the worker who put a lock on removes it, except under the supervisor's procedure when that is not possible.
- Where many people or devices are involved, a group lockout procedure applies.

Ask the crew

- What energy sources does the equipment we are servicing have (electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, gravity)?
- Where is the written lockout procedure?
- Does everyone have a personal lock and know how to use it?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 10.2 to 10.9 (de-energization and lockout) (Part 10 De-energization and Lockout)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-10-de-energization-and-lockout>

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Hearing protection: it only works once

Noise-induced hearing loss builds up slowly and is permanent. By the time you notice, the damage is done.

Key points

- In B.C. workers must not be exposed to noise above 85 dBA (daily noise exposure level, Lex) or a 140 dBC peak.
- Where noise can't be reduced below the limits, hearing protection is supplied and workers in a posted noise hazard area must wear it.
- Employers with noise over the limits must run a noise control and hearing conservation program, including training and hearing tests.
- Hearing tests are done within 6 months of starting and at least every 12 months after that.
- Hearing protection must fit and be worn the whole time you are in the noisy area. Taking it out briefly cuts the protection a lot.
- Report ringing in your ears or trouble following conversation. They are warning signs.

Ask the crew

- Which areas or tools here are posted as noise hazards?
- Is everyone's hearing protection fitted correctly?
- When is the next round of hearing tests?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 7.2 to 7.9 (noise) (Part 7 Noise, Vibration, Radiation and Temperature)

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-07-noise-vibration-radiation-and-temperature>

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Manual handling: lift smart

Strains and sprains of the back, shoulders and arms are among the most common work injuries. They usually develop from repeated loading, awkward postures and force, not a single lift.

Key points

- Employers must identify and assess risk factors for musculoskeletal injury (MSI) and eliminate or minimize them.
- Workers must be educated on how to recognize risk factors and early signs of MSI, and trained in the controls for their work.
- Change the task before you change the technique: use a cart, hoist, lift assist or a team lift, and store heavy items between knee and shoulder height.
- Test the load before you lift. If it is too heavy, bulky or awkward, get help or equipment.
- Keep the load close, avoid twisting, and move your feet to turn.
- Report discomfort, pain or numbness early. Early reporting can prevent a long-term injury.

Ask the crew

- Which task here do we lift or carry the most?
- What equipment could take the load for us?
- Have you noticed any aches that come from a particular task?

Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 4.46 to 4.53 (musculoskeletal injury risk), including 4.51 on education and training (Part 4 General Conditions)
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-04-general-conditions>
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