WALZEL

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Fall protection safety

Understanding falls

Some falls cause more severe injuries than others.

Falls from the same level – Involve falling at the same level and result in a person falling to the floor or to the ground. Examples include slips and trips. Slips and trips have a high frequency rate but a low injury severity rate.

Falls from elevation – Involve falling from one level to another. Examples include falling from a scaffold to the ground below. These types of falls have a relatively low frequency rate but a high injury severity rate.

Fall protection methods

- Guardrail systems and toeboards – A guardrail is a vertical barrier, normally consisting of an assembly of toprails, midrails and posts, erected to prevent employees from falling to lower levels. A toeboard is a barrier placed to prevent the fall of materials to a lower level, or to keep employees' feet from slipping over an edge.
- Handrail and stair rail systems – A handrail is used to assist employees going up or down stairways, ramps or other walking/working surfaces by providing a handhold for support. A stair rail protects employees from falling over the edge of an open-sided stairway.
- Slip-resistant floors – Slip resistant flooring material such as textured, serrated or punched surfaces and steel grating may increase slip-resistance. These types of floor surfaces should be installed in work areas that are generally slippery because of wet, oily, or dirty operations. Slip-resistant footwear may also be useful in reducing slipping hazards.

Housekeeping

Housekeeping is an important component in preventing falls. High work areas should be kept free from tools, materials, debris, or liquids that could create slippery surfaces.

Reporting fall hazards

Reporting fall hazards is part of any effective safety effort. Report unsafe equipment, conditions, or procedures. Under no circumstances should defective fall protection equipment be used.