



FALL PREVENTION ALLIANCE TOOLBOX TALK ON STEEL TOWERS

Company: _____ Job Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

All employees need to be trained to ensure their safety. Following are safety guidelines for fall protection on steel towers:

Fall Protection: Prior to employees climbing the tower at heights above 6 feet, one-hundred percent (100%) fall protection systems must be provided, used, and maintained.

- All fall protection must be compatible with the assigned tasks (such as retrofitting a communication tower).

Pre-climb Planning and Inspection: In addition to the criteria for pre-climb planning and inspection included below, the following items must occur prior to employees climbing the tower at heights above 6 feet:

- All climbing jobs are required to be planned by a competent person. All climbing facilities must be visually inspected daily at the tower base by the competent person for rust, corrosion, deterioration, or other hazards.
- Climbing facilities must be visually inspected for these items, as it is ascended, to the elevation point where work is performed.
- When any such hazard is identified during this inspection, employees must not use the climbing facility until such hazards are abated.
- A competent person must ensure that all fall protection equipment is inspected prior to use for wear, damage, defect, or deterioration.
- Defective equipment must be identified as defective and immediately removed from service.
- Components of a fall protection system and the fall protection equipment utilized by employees must be compatible with one another and are required to be utilized in accordance with the manufacture's recommendations.
- Planning and inspection must be performed and documented. The documentation is required to be maintained on site while work is being performed, and thereafter by the company at its place of business. The documentation must include the date of the planning and inspection, the name of the competent person performing the planning and inspection, and the site location.

Fall Protection Systems: In order to comply with the requirements above, employees may be permitted to utilize the one-hundred percent (100%) fall protection system described below. If the fall protection systems described are not present on the tower, the employees must not be permitted to climb the tower at heights above 6 feet unless:

- An alternative means of 100% fall protection is utilized that is at least as effective as the fall protection systems listed below.
- An alternative means of access to the work area is utilized such as an aerial lift or elevated work platform.
- The requirements can be demonstrated that the written fall protection plan have been met.

Guardrail Systems: Guardrails systems and their components that are utilized by employees as a means of 100% fall protection are required to conform to specific criteria:

- Top edge height of top rails must be 42 inches plus or minus 3 inches above the walking/working level.
- When conditions warrant, top rails may exceed the 45 inch height provided the guardrail system meets all other criteria.
- Mid-rails are required to be installed at a height midway between the top edge of the guardrail system and the walking/working level.
- Guardrail systems must be capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 200 pounds applied within 2 inches of the top edge, in any outward or downward direction. When applied downward, the top edge must not deflect to a height less than 39 inches above the walking/working level.

Through the OSHA and Houston Fall Prevention Alliance, this Toolbox Talk was developed for informational purposes only. It does not necessarily reflect the official views of OSHA or the U.S. Department of Labor. July 2016.

The Houston Fall Prevention Alliance was formed by the below organizations to provide their members, and others, with information, guidance and access to training resources that will help them protect the health and safety of workers, particularly by reducing and preventing exposure to fall hazards in the construction industries and addressing fall related issues and understand the rights of workers and the responsibilities of employers under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). In developing this alliance, these organizations recognize that OSHA's State Plan and On-site Consultation Project partners are an integral part of the OSHA national effort.





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Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAS): Personal fall arrest systems and their components that are utilized by employees as a means of 100% fall protection are required to conform to specific criteria and utilized to the manufacturer’s recommendations. When utilized by employees as an anchorage as part of the PFAS, the step bolts and the attachment point to the structure must be designed to meet the requirements of an approved anchorage and must be designed to ensure the connector will not slip off the end of the step bolt.

- Dee-rings, snap hooks, lanyards, lifelines, and anchorages must have a minimum tensile strength of 5,000 pounds.
- When stopping a fall, employees can neither free fall more than 6 feet, nor contact any lower level.
- Prompt rescue of employees must be provided in the event of a fall or there must be assurance that employees can rescue themselves.

Conclusion: PFAS are required to be inspected prior to each use for wear, damage, or other deterioration by a competent person and defective components must be removed from service. Utilize these safety guidelines for fall protection on steel towers.

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