

INTRODUCTION OF DAILY TOPIC:

Today we are taking part in OSHA's National Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls. This nationwide event encourages companies across every industry to pause work and focus on one of the most serious and persistent hazards in the workplace: falls from heights and falls on the same level. Falls remain one of the leading causes of worker fatalities and life-altering injuries. Every year, workers are severely hurt or killed while performing routine tasks - climbing ladders, accessing equipment platforms, stepping near unprotected edges, or simply walking through an area with slip hazards. In 2023 alone, falls to lower levels accounted for 37% of all construction fatalities. Slips, trips and falls contribute to roughly 20% of all workplace injuries, leading to lost workdays. The most troubling part is that nearly all fall-related incidents are preventable with the right preparation, equipment, communication, and awareness.

Falls don't only happen from high places; people are seriously injured from falls of 6 feet, 4 feet, and even less. Fall hazards exist in almost every work environment—not just construction. Many incidents occur when workers “only need a second” to finish a task or believe the risk is minor. A lack of planning, improper use of equipment, or missing protections can quickly turn a normal job into an emergency. Even experienced workers are at risk when familiar tasks become routine and vigilance fades.



CASE STUDY 1:

FIVE MINUTES TO FINISH THE ROOF.

It's 3:45 p.m. on a Friday. A small crew is finishing shingling a commercial roof about 18 feet off the ground. Jose has been tied off all day using a personal fall arrest system. They're one bundle of shingles short, so the supervisor asks Jose to "just run over and finish the last section" near the roof edge. The nearest anchor point is 25 feet away, and Jose's lanyard can't reach the area he needs to work. Instead of stopping to move the anchor or install a temporary guardrail, Jose unhooks his lanyard "just for a minute" to nail the last few shingles. As he's backing up and looking at the shingle line instead of the edge, his heel catches on a loose shingle scrap. He loses his balance right near the edge.

Ask:

- What are the unsafe conditions or actions you heard in this story?
- What should Jose have done when he realized his lanyard couldn't reach?
- If you were a coworker and saw Jose unhook, what could you say on the spot?

Takeaways:

- **Never unhook "just for a minute."** Any time you're within 6 feet of an unprotected edge at this height, you must be protected (guardrail, safety net, or personal fall arrest system).
- **Plan for reach and anchor locations.** Anchors should be placed so workers can reach all work areas while staying tied off, or additional anchors must be installed.
- **Empower crew to speak up.** It's acceptable – and expected – to say: "Hold up, let's move the anchor or set up a guardrail first."

CASE STUDY 2:

TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE IN A SCISSOR LIFT.

A two-person crew is using a scissor lift to install ductwork inside a warehouse. The lift is parked about 4 feet away from an open interior mezzanine edge, 20 feet above the ground. There is no guardrail at the mezzanine edge yet. Marcus is operating the lift while Kelly works on the platform. Neither is wearing a harness (company policy doesn't require it for this type of scissor lift, but they must stay inside the guardrails). To reach a duct connection, Kelly steps up on the mid-rail and leans out over the guardrail, so her center of gravity is outside the platform. Marcus inches the lift forward so she can just reach the last connection. The lift bumps a floor joint; Kelly loses her balance and nearly flips over the top rail.

Ask:

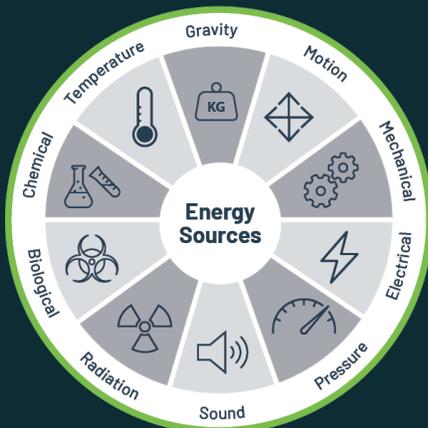
- What rules about scissor lifts or MEWPs were broken here?
- Why is standing on the mid-rail or top rail so dangerous, even with guardrails?
- What safer options did they have to reach that last connection? Should they have been working this close to an unprotected mezzanine edge in the first place? What would you change?

Takeaways:

- Guardrails are the fall protection on most scissor lifts. You must keep both feet on the platform and stay inside the rails.
- Do not climb or stand on rails. It changes your center of gravity and defeats the protection guardrails provide.
- Plan the work area around edges. Either install temporary edge protection (guardrails) or reposition the lift farther from the edge if possible.
- Use the right equipment and configuration. Options: reposition the lift, use a different lift with more reach, adjust duct layout sequence so edges are protected beforehand.

WRAP UP:

Both Case Studies show how serious fall hazards often come from small decisions made in the moment—usually because someone is trying to save time or “just get it done.” In Case Study 1, unhooking from a personal fall arrest system for a few minutes created a completely unprotected situation near a roof edge. In Case Study 2, climbing onto the mid-rail of a scissor lift and working close to an unprotected mezzanine edge put the worker outside the equipment’s built-in fall protection. In both cases, the hazards were known, the protections were available, and the fall risks were avoidable. The takeaway is clear: fall protection only works when we use it correctly every single time—no shortcuts, no exceptions. That means staying tied off anytime we’re exposed to an edge, keeping our feet firmly on the lift platform and our body inside the guardrails, placing anchor points and equipment where we can reach safely, and stopping work when something feels unsafe. If a task requires us to stretch, lean, climb, or disconnect, that’s a sign the setup needs to be changed—not that we should take a risk. Speaking up, slowing down, and choosing the safer action every time is what prevents falls, protects each other, and ensures everyone goes home at the end of the day.



The Energy Wheel



The STCKY Wheel

