

The Solution is Simple: Use Fall Protection

Throughout 2009, falls remained a significant cause of injuries and fatalities in Ontario's construction and transportation industry. Using fall protection properly can make the difference between life and death.

As an employer, you need to make sure that your employees get fall protection training. As a supervisor, you need to make sure that your employees are using fall protection properly. If it's not used correctly, it won't protect anyone.

Best option

Wherever possible install permanent guardrails on tankers and trailers where the employee is required to climb on top of the vehicle. They are the best option because they reduce the fall hazard for everyone who has access to the trailer.

If that's not possible, each employee who may be exposed to the fall hazard must use a fall-arrest or travel-restraint system.

The principles for providing fall protection for employees working at heights above 2.4 metres on top of trailers or their loads are the same as for any other work site. These are listed in their order of preference, namely:

1. Eliminate the need to work at heights.

This is the best and most reliable means to prevent any risk of injury due to falls from heights.

2. Modify the work site or work method to make working at heights safe.

Locations such as terminals, inspection stations and bulk loading/unloading facilities could be equipped with raised platforms or other similar systems that allow employees to perform their duties without having to climb onto the vehicle.

3. Put safety systems in place to guard the workers from falling.

Equip vehicles with walking platforms, guardrails as well as access ladders that allow work to be performed safely on the vehicle, while it is stationary, without the need for employees to wear personal protective equipment.

4. Provide personal fall-protection equipment.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these options and the nature of vehicle operations may not lend itself to one choice only in all conditions. However, employers and employees should be fully aware of the issues involved with each of these approaches.

Fall-arrest and travel-restraint

- ◆ Always tie off to an anchor point that meets the minimum strength requirement. For fall arrest, as a general rule, choose an anchor point that is capable of supporting the weight of a small car (approximately 3,600 pounds).
- ◆ Make sure that everyone who is exposed to a fall hazard is using a *complete* fall-arrest or travel-restraint system (i.e., harness, lanyard, rope grab, lifeline).
- ◆ Demonstrate how to use the equipment. Don't assume that your workers have used a particular type of rope grab or harness before.
- ◆ We said it before, but it's worth repeating: remind all your employees to tie off. If the fall-arrest or travel-restraint system is not tied off to an adequate anchor, it's useless. Many employees have died after hitting the ground with fall-arrest equipment on, but not attached to anything. Adopt a zero-tolerance policy for employees who don't tie off.

Please review HRSD – Labour's **Fall-Protection Systems for Vehicles - IPG-064** reference document. <http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/labour/ipg/064.shtml>

For more information, please visit www.ihsa.ca.