

OHS Fall Protection Requirements



A. WHEN FALL PROTECTION IS REQUIRED

OHS regulations specify when fall protection to workers working at heights is required based on:

- How high up they are (typically 3 metres or higher);
- The surface or platform they work on (e.g., vehicles, scaffolds, sloped rooves); and
- What they're at risk of falling through, on or into (e.g., machinery, hard surfaces, water).

But while the approach is the same, specific criteria vary by location.

Jurisdiction	Fall Protection Mandatory for Workers Working:
Federal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On unguarded structure or vehicle > 2.4 m above nearest safe level, moving parts of machinery or other surface/thing likely to cause injury by contact; • On temporary structure > 6 m above permanent safe level; • On ladder > 2.4 m above nearest permanent safe level where worker can't use at least one hand to hold ladder (OHS Regs, Sec. 12.10(1))
Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On portable ladder 3 m or higher (OHS Code, Sec. 137(1)) • On temporary or permanent work area or structure where there's risk of falling: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3 m or more; < 3 m but unusual possibility of injury exists; Into or onto a hazardous substance or object; Thru an opening in the work surface (OHS Code, Sec. 139(1))
BC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where they risk falling 3 m or more • Where they risk falling < 3 m but risk of injury is greater than risk of injury from impact on flat surface (OHS Reg., Sec. 11.2(1))

Manitoba	<p style="text-align: center;">Where they risk falling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 m or more • < 3 m but risk of injury is greater due to surface or item they may land on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into operating machines or moving parts • Into water or other liquids • Into or onto a hazardous substance or object <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thru an opening on a work surface • >1.2 m from area used as path for wheelbarrows or similar equipment (Workplace Safety & Health Regs., Sec. 14.1(1))
New Brunswick	<p style="text-align: center;">Where they risk falling from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unguarded work area: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. 3 m or more above nearest safe level ii. Above surface or thing that may hurt on contact iii. Above open top tank, pit or vat • Work platform 3 m or more above permanent safe level and from which they may fall if platform tips or fails • Communication or power transmission tower or similar structure 3 m or more-high • In a work area that a govt official says requires a fall-arrest system (OHS General Regs., Sec. 49(1))
Newfoundland & Labrador	<p style="text-align: center;">Where they risk fall from work area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 m or more above nearest safe surface or water • Above surface or thing that could cause injury were worker to fall on it • Above open tank, pit or vat containing hazardous material (OHS Regs., Sec. 141(a)-(c))
Nova Scotia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 m or more above nearest safe surface or water • Less than 3 m when the work area is above one of the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. a surface or thing that could cause injury to the person on contact that's worse than an injury from landing on a solid, flat surface ii. exposed hazardous material, such as in an open tank, pit or vat (Workplace Health Safety Regs., Sec. 21.2(1))
Ontario	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>GENERAL INDUSTRY</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where they risk falling 3 m or more (Ind. Est. Regs., Sec. 85)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>CONSTRUCTION</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Where they risk falling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • > 3 m • > 1.25 m if work area used as path for wheelbarrows or similar equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Into operating machinery • Into water or another liquid • Into or onto a hazardous substance or object • Through an opening on work surface (Const. Proj. Regs., Sec. 26); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When getting on or off suspended platform, suspended scaffold or boatswain's chair (Const. Proj. Regs., Sec. 141(1))
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 m or more above nearest safe surface or water • Above surface or thing that could cause injury were worker to fall on it • Above open tank, pit or vat containing hazardous material (Fall Prot. Regs., Sec. 2(1))

QUÉBEC	<u>GENERAL INDUSTRY</u> Where they risk falls of > 3 m unless protected by equivalent safety device or safety net or they're just using some means of egress or ingress (Reg. respecting OH&S, Sec. 346)
	<u>CONSTRUCTION</u> • Where they risk falls of > 3 m • Where they risk falling: i. Into dangerous liquid or substances ii. Onto moving components iii. Onto dangerous equipment or material iv. From 1.2 m or more when using a wheelbarrow or vehicle (Safety Code for Const. Ind., Sec. 2.9.1.)
SASKATCHEWAN	Where they risk falls of: • 3 m or more • < 3 m but there's a chance of injury (OHS Regs., Sec. 116(2))
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES & NUNAVUT	• 3 m or more above grade or floor level • Over a pit or shaft or operating machinery • Where a fall could lead to drowning (General Safety Regs., Sec. 57(1))
YUKON	• Where they risk falls of 3 m or more • Where they risk falls of < 3 m but there's an unusual risk of injury • Where they risk falling into pits, shafts, machinery, water or bulk material that can shift (OHS Regs., Sec. 1.37)

B. MAXIMUM FALL ARREST FREE FALL DISTANCES & ARRESTING FORCES

Fall arrest systems don't prevent falls but stop them before a worker plunges too far. But the action of arresting a fall can put a lot of stress on the body creating physical shock that can injure or even kill the worker. Accordingly, fall arrest systems are subject to stricter design, use and installation requirements including with regard to:

- How far they can let a worker fall before arresting it; and
- How much force they can exert on the worker's body in arresting the fall.

Jurisdiction	Maximum Free Fall Distance (assuming no shock absorber used)	Maximum Arresting Force (in kiloNewtons (kN))
Federal	1.2 metres	8 kN
Alberta	1.2 metres	6kN (unless worker is using E6 shock absorber allowing for 8 kN)
BC	1.2 metres	Not specified in Regs. but WorkSafeBC guidelines stipulate 8 kN
Manitoba	1.2 metres	8 kN
New Brunswick	1.8 metres	8 kN
Newfoundland & Labrador	1.22 metres	As specified in CSA standard applicable to equipment used

Nova Scotia	As specified in latest version of CSA standard CSA Z259.16, "Design of active fall-protection systems"	As specified in latest version of CSA standard CSA Z259.16, "Design of active fall-protection systems"
Ontario	<u>GENERAL INDUSTRY</u> 1.5 metres <u>CONSTRUCTION</u> 0.6 metres	<u>GENERAL INDUSTRY</u> 8 kN <u>CONSTRUCTION</u> 8 kN
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	1.22 metres	As specified in CSA standard applicable to equipment used
QUÉBEC	1.2 metres	As specified in CSA standard applicable to equipment used
SASKATCHEWAN	1.2 metres	8 kN
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES & NUNAVUT	1.2 metres	8 kN
YUKON	1.2 metres	As specified in CSA standard applicable to equipment used

C. WHERE & WHEN A FALL PROTECTION PROGRAM IS REQUIRED

Although required fall protection measures are roughly the same across Canada, nine jurisdictions require employers to codify everything in a written document called a fall protection program or plan. Here's a look at where fall protection programs are required and under which circumstances.

Jurisdiction	Fall Protection Program Mandatory When:
Alberta	Workers are at risk of falling 3 or more metres and there are no guardrails
BC	Workers are at risk of falling 7.5 metres or more metres and there are no guardrails or fall arrest systems are not practicable
New Brunswick	Code of practice required when fall protection is required (See A above), and one of the following 3 things is true: i. Workers are working at height of 7.5 metres or more ii. Employer uses a safety monitor and work procedures when weatherproofing as means of fall protection iii. A government officer requires a written code of practice
Newfoundland & Labrador	Fall arrest systems or safety nets are the principle means of fall protection
Nova Scotia	Fall protection is required and maximum fall distance is less than 7.5 metres
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	Fall arrest systems or safety nets are the principle means of fall protection

SASKATCHEWAN	Workers are at risk of falling 3 or more metres and there are no guardrails or similar barriers in place
YUKON	Workers are at risk of falling 7.5 or more metres and there are no guardrails