

New Working at Heights Training Standards to Take Effect in Ontario



In the construction industry, one of the most common safety hazards is working at heights. So the OHS regulations across Canada include various requirements related to the use of fall prevention and protection. However, violations of these requirements are also common. As a result, too many workers are injured and killed each year in avoidable falls. Ontario is trying to tackle this issue with new standards for training on working at heights. Compliance with these standards was initially voluntary. However, as of April 1, 2015, such compliance will be mandatory. Here's an overview of the two related training standards.

TRAINING STANDARDS

Key Dates: The working at heights training standards will take effect as of April 1, 2015. However, there's a two-year transition period for workers who already meet the existing fall protection training requirements set out in Sec. 26.2 of the [*Construction Projects Regulation*](#). Such workers will have until April 1, 2017, to complete an approved working at heights training program. Such training is valid for three years from the date of successful completion of an approved program. After three years, workers can renew their training by successfully completing an approved half-day 'refresher' training program, which meets the learning outcomes of Module

2 of the Working at Heights Training Program Standard (discussed below).

Who They Apply to: The training standards apply to all construction projects covered by the [Construction Projects Regulation](#). The new training requirements will be mandatory for workers on construction projects who are required to use any of the following methods of fall protection:

- Travel restraint system;
- Fall restricting system;
- Fall arrest system;
- Safety net;
- Work belt; or
- Safety belt.

The Standards: There are actually two related working at heights standards:

Training program standard. The [Working at Heights Training Program Standard](#) outlines the topics and information that must be included in an approved working at heights training program. There are two modules:

- Module 1 (Basic Theory) is knowledge and awareness based and is a minimum of three hours long. It includes foundational elements on how to work safely at heights and covers topics such as rights and responsibilities related to working at heights; identifying hazards of working at heights; safety culture; PPE; warning methods and physical barriers; and ladder safety.
- Module 2 (Practical) contains more advanced information on fall protection systems and includes hands-on demonstration of equipment and procedures. It's a minimum of three and a half hours long and must include a practical demonstration of the proper use of fall protection equipment. This module also covers topics such as barriers and other fixed equipment; PPE; anchor

points; work access equipment and platforms; and rescue planning.

Training provider standard. To meet the new requirements, working at heights training must be delivered by a CP0-approved training provider. Such a training provider could be an individual, sole proprietor, corporation or non-profit organization or an employer wishing to deliver 'in-house' training to its workers. The [Working at Heights Training Provider Standard](#) outlines the minimum criteria for training providers to meet to be approved by the CP0 to deliver approved working at heights training programs. The standard includes instructor qualifications and other considerations for quality training delivery. In addition, it requires an approved training provider to supply a worker with proof of training as soon as he successfully completes an approved working at heights training program.

ANALYSIS

The Ontario Ministry of Labour explains that the working at heights training standards were developed because falls from heights are a major hazard for workers and one of the leading causes of critical injuries and fatalities in Ontario workplaces. It developed these standards in consultation with labour and employer representatives from a variety of sectors. Although the application of the standards is currently limited to the construction sector, the MOL notes that their application could be expanded to other sectors in the future. And obviously, the training standards only apply in Ontario. However, they can be a useful resource for employers in other jurisdictions whose workers are at risk of falling. For more on these standards, watch this [recorded webinar](#) by Dylan Short, Managing Director of [The Redlands Group](#) and a senior safety, health and education executive leader. In addition, here are a few OHS Insider resources that can help you protect workers from falls:

- [Fall protection plan requirements](#);
- [Hierarchy of fall protection](#); and
- [Fall protection inspection checklist](#).