Portable Ladder Fall Protection – Ask The Expert



Understanding fall protection requirements when using a portable ladder in Saskatchewan requires careful consideration of two key sections of occupational health and safety legislation: the provisions on portable ladders and the broader fall protection regulations.

While the portable ladder section may not explicitly mention fall protection requirements beyond safe usage guidelines, the fall protection legislation applies more generally to any work at heights exceeding 3 meters.

QUESTION

In Saskatchewan, do you require fall protection when going up a portable ladder past 3 M? Under the portable ladder section in the legislation it does not indicate fall protection is required, however under the fall protection legislation it does not state specifics just 3 M – would that be the latter then?

ANSWER

Yes, as in all jurisdictions, employers in Saskatchewan must provide fall protection to workers at risk of falling 3 metres or more. This is true regardless of whether the worker is on a portable ladder, elevated surface, lifting device, etc.

EXPLANATION

In Saskatchewan, the requirement for fall protection when using portable ladders is governed by The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020. While the regulations provide specific guidelines for the safe use of portable ladders, they also establish general fall protection requirements for work at heights.

The regulations outline specific requirements to ensure the safe use of portable ladders, including proper placement, maintenance, and usage practices. However, these sections do not explicitly mention the need for additional fall protection equipment, such as harnesses or guardrails, when using portable ladders.

According to the regulations, employers must provide a fall protection system when workers are at risk of falling three meters (approximately 10 feet) or more, or when there is a possibility of injury if a worker falls from any height. This general requirement applies to all work scenarios, including those involving portable ladders.

Given that the general fall protection requirements apply to all work at heights of three meters or more, it is prudent to implement appropriate fall protection measures when workers are using portable ladders at or above this height. This approach aligns with the intent of the regulations to protect workers from fall hazards and ensures compliance with occupational health and safety standards.