

Spot The Safety Violation: Working at Heights



These workers seem to be missing some key equipment' Do you know what it is'



Falls are one of the most common safety hazards, especially in industries such as construction. That's why the OHS laws generally require the use of fall protection when workers work at elevations above three metres. It certainly looks like several of the workers in this picture are more than three metres above the ground. But are they wearing personal fall arrest systems' Are there guardrails in place' Is there *any* form of fall protection at the site' Nope.

Solution: Falls are one of the leading cause of workplace injury in Canada. According to CCOHS, approximately **60,000** Canadian workers are injured each year due to falls, which represents about 15% of the lost-time injuries that were accepted by workers' comp boards across the country.

So it's no surprise that the OHS laws spell out detailed requirements for protecting workers from falls from heights. The OHS Insider explains how to comply with these requirements, including:

- The [hierarchy of fall protection equipment](#)
- The use of [fall protection plans](#)
- Protecting workers from [falls through openings](#)

- A [fall protection inspection checklist](#).

And it's important that you ensure that workers *actually use* their fall protection when required. If they don't, they're at risk of falling and even being fined.

Example: During an inspection of a home construction site, an OHS officer saw four workers on the roof whose harnesses weren't attached to anchorages. But their employer had provided the required fall protection training to the workers. They pleaded guilty to failing to use equipment provided for protection in accordance with the instructions for use and the training received. The court fined three workers \$500 each and the fourth, who also held supervisory duties, \$750 [Govt. News Release, May 22, 2012].