
Common fall hazards

OHS information for employers, supervisors and workers

KEY INFORMATION

- Falls are hazards at all Alberta workplaces.
- The hazards of a fall exist whether you can fall from a high or low height.

Whether a construction site, dairy farm or in an office space, fall hazards can be present at nearly all work sites. The complexity and risk related to a fall can vary between different workplaces, but the overall hazard of a fall is always a concern, whether that fall is from a great height or one at the same level.

Be careful on stairs

Stairs are a common area where falls occur. Falling down the stairs can cause serious injuries with long recovery times. Always hold the handrail when climbing or descending stairs, don't look at your phone or rush, don't skip steps, and don't carry anything that will compromise your ability to hold the handrail. The handrail can assist with balance correction before a fall. When going to another floor/level, take the elevator if you are carrying things requiring the use of both hands. Never carry a load you can't see over or around. Use a dolly or ask someone for a hand.

Climbing up and down ladders

Ladders serve as helpful tools around the workplace, but can quickly become a hazard if not used correctly. Be sure to:

- always inspect ladders and equipment for fitness before use,
- have a good hand hold before stepping up,
- place the arch of your foot fully on the step or rung,
- make sure you have and maintain three points of contact, and
- never stand on the top rung of a ladder.



Entering and exiting equipment

Equipment size and use can vary between work sites. We enter and exit equipment at work, or on our commute whether the equipment is a skid steer, tower crane, tractor, car or bus. Equipment can get muddy, be wet and slippery, or have uneven surfaces. These conditions present a hazard to workers entering and exiting vehicles and equipment.

To help avoid a fall, first make sure the equipment's running board, tread, step, foot hold, and/or platform are dry and clean of any contamination if possible. Also:

- ensure you have and maintain three-point contact,
- use the appropriate gear including tread and footwear for the task and conditions,
- check the condition of the ground before exiting,
- utilize proper available PPE such as a five-point harness and receive the proper fall protection training on equipment (such as pickers) or any equipment that operates for working at heights,
- face equipment when entering and exiting,
- make sure to clean your footwear,
- have a good hand hold before stepping up or down, and
- place the arch of your foot fully on the step or foothold.

About the OHS Prevention Initiative

The [OHS Prevention Initiative](#) is a partnership between the Alberta government, employers, workers, health and safety associations, labour organizations, service providers (consultants, trainers and auditors) and WCB-Alberta. Its aim is preventing workplace injury and illness.

Contributors to this resource

Alberta Construction Safety Association
 Alberta Forest Products Association
 Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association
 Alberta Motor Transport Association
 Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association
 AgSafe Alberta
 Continuing Care Safety Association
 Energy Safety Canada
 Ledcor Group of Companies

For more information

Occupational health and safety fall protection plan
[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/g010](https://pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/g010)

Prevention Initiative slips, trips, and falls
[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/slips-trips-and-falls](https://pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/slips-trips-and-falls)

Other resources

WCB-Alberta – Worker handbook
wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/workers/worker_handbook.pdf

WCB-Alberta – Forms and guides
wcb.ab.ca/resources/for-employers/forms-and-guides/

Government of Alberta OHS resource portal
[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/](https://pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/)

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