
Fall protection plan

OHS information for employers and workers

This resource provides information about occupational health and safety fall protection plans.

KEY INFORMATION

- Employers are required to prepare a fall protection plan when a worker may fall three metres or more and the worker is not protected by guardrails.
- The fall protection plan must include:
 - The potential fall hazards at the work site.
 - The fall protection system being used.
 - The anchors to be used during the work.
 - Confirmation that clearance distances below the work area, if applicable, have been confirmed as sufficient to protect workers.
 - The procedures used to assemble, maintain, inspect, use, and disassemble the fall protection system, where applicable.
 - Rescue procedures for workers who become suspended after a fall.

When a fall protection plan is required

Section 140 of Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Code (OHS Code) requires employers to prepare a fall protection plan when work-at-height situations meet both of the following criteria:

- A worker may fall three metres or more.
- The worker is not protected by guardrails.

Purpose of the fall protection plan

The purpose of the fall protection plan is to:

- Ensure employers and workers do enough planning before beginning work at height to assess (and then eliminate or control) fall hazards for workers. This includes choosing the most appropriate fall protection system and equipment for the specific work site conditions.
- Show that the employer determined the clearance distance below the work area to ensure that if a worker falls, they do not strike the ground, an object, or level below the work area. Inadequate clearance can result in serious injury or loss of life. If there is inadequate clearance, a different type of fall protection system may be required, or the work must be done differently.

- Ensure workers using the fall protection system have access to all the most up-to-date information they need to assemble, maintain, inspect, use, and disassemble it.
- Ensure that practical rescue procedures have been prepared and are understood by workers.

Required information

The fall protection plan must include the following information:

The fall hazards at the work site

Workers and the employer must conduct a site-specific hazard assessment and list the locations and circumstances at the work site where a worker could fall (such as a leading edge, an unguarded opening, or a boom-supported work platform).

The fall protection system to be used at the work site

This should be a brief description of the system being used, such as fall arrest, travel restraint, fall restrict, horizontal lifeline, safety net, work positioning, or control zone. Note that a single work site might have different fall hazards that require different controls. These need to be separately identified.

The anchors to be used during the work

Describe the permanent and temporary (if used) anchors, their locations, any special requirements such as the materials and structures into which they can be installed, performance and load limits, and any other pertinent information.

Confirmation of sufficient clearance distances

The plan must confirm that clearance distances below the work area, if applicable, are sufficient to prevent a worker from striking the ground, an object, or a level below the work area. A work site may have several work areas with different clearance distances, depending on the design of the work site and type of fall protection systems being used. If so, the plan must confirm the safety of the clearance distances for each work area.

For convenience, the fall protection plan template at the end of this bulletin shows how to calculate clearance distances for a fixed-length lanyard system.

The procedures used to assemble, maintain, inspect, use, and disassemble the fall protection system, where applicable

These procedures are often found in manufacturer's specification for the equipment and other product instructions. Procedures must provide practical and understandable instruction to workers on how to properly assemble, maintain, inspect, use, and disassemble the fall protection system. If these procedures are too lengthy to include in the fall protection plan, the plan can simply make reference to these as separate documents, provided that the documents are available at the work site and are reviewed by workers before beginning work where there is a fall hazard.

The rescue procedures to be used in the event of a fall

If a worker falls and is suspended by a personal fall arrest system or safety net and needs to be rescued, rescue procedures must already be in place.

Although calling 9-1-1 may be part of a rescue response, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety requires employers to have some means of basic rescue capability at the work site in case rescue services are delayed or cannot reach the scene. Basic means of rescue may include:

- Having access to a man lift or scissor lift at the work site that is capable of reaching a suspended worker, and someone that is able to competently operate the equipment.
- Having ladders on-site that are capable of reaching a suspended worker.
- Equipping workers with leg loop extensions for their full body harnesses (suspension relief straps). These attach to the full body harness, providing foot loops into which a suspended worker can place their feet and then raise the legs.
- From above the fallen worker's suspended position, a worker can lower a loop of rope into which the fallen worker places their feet and can then stand up. It may also allow the worker to connect to a descent system followed by disconnection from their fall arrest system.
- Using a self-retracting device that includes an integral hand winch that allows the suspended worker to be raised upwards or lowered to safety.
- Equipping workers in certain situations with self-rescue devices such as specialized descenders, which allow a suspended worker to remove themselves from their lanyard and descend to safety.

When to update the fall protection plan

The employer must ensure the plan is updated when conditions affecting fall protection change. For example, this may involve physical changes at the work site requiring the

use of different anchors or anchor locations, the introduction of new fall protection devices that have different procedures, or using an altogether different approach to fall protection.

Availability and review by workers

The employer must ensure the fall protection plan is available at the work site and is reviewed with workers before work with a risk of falling begins. The employer must also ensure that the plan is updated when conditions affecting fall protection change.

Multiple work sites

Even if there are similar hazards, fall protection equipment, and procedures at multiple work sites, the employer is still required to ensure a site-specific fall protection plan is in place at each work site.

Rope access

When conducting work requiring rope access, a special type of fall protection plan (called a "rope access safe work plan") is needed. The requirements for this rope access safe work plan are specified in Section 809 of the OHS Code. Section 809 is under Part 41 of the OHS Code, which contains all the requirements pertaining to work where rope access is needed.

Contact us

OHS Contact Centre

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton and surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hard of hearing (TTY)

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

Notify OHS of health and safety concerns

alberta.ca/file-complaint-online.aspx

Call the OHS Contact Centre if you have concerns that involve immediate danger to a person on a work site.

Report a workplace incident to OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx

Website

alberta.ca/ohs

Get copies of the OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta King's Printer

alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx

OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx

For more information

Fall protection plan: Information sheet for residential roofing (GS010-1)

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/gs010-1

Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers (BP018)

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018

Prime contractor roles and duties (LI018)

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li018

Role and duties of Alberta OHS officers (LI046)

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li046

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Fall protection plan template

This is one example of a fall protection plan template. If you choose to use this template, make sure you customize it to your work and work site.

Name of employer: _____

Work site (i.e. civic address): _____

Period for which this plan is valid: _____

Fall hazards at the work site

Identify the specific work area and circumstances where a worker could fall (e.g. “leading edge of second floor work area”, “unguarded opening on third floor”, etc.)

Fall protection system(s) to be used at the work site

Brief description of the system(s) being used (fall arrest, travel restraint, fall restrict, horizontal lifeline, safety net, work positioning, control zone, etc.)

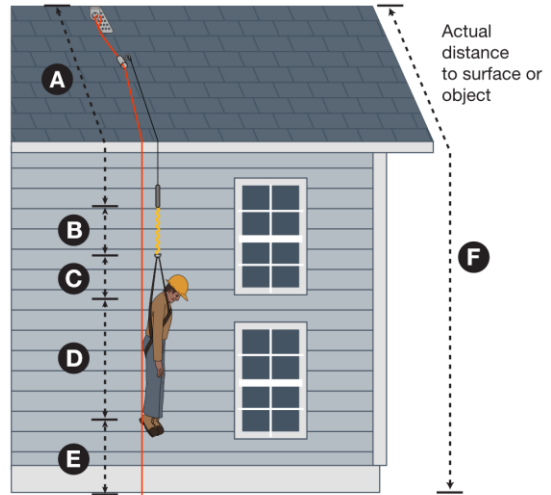
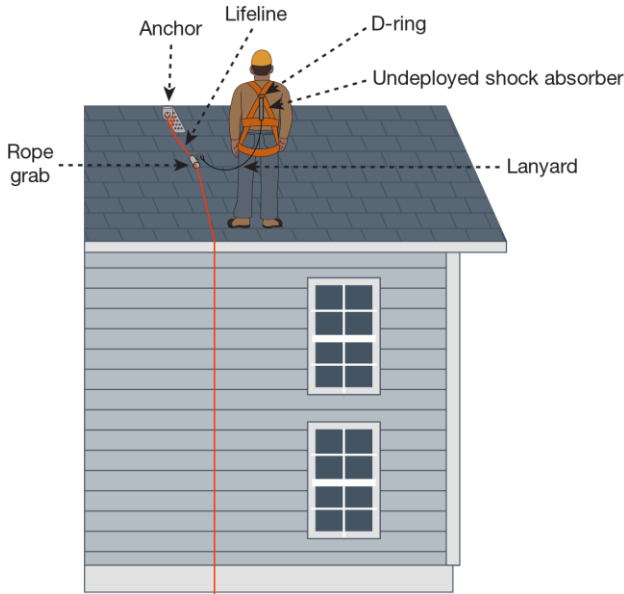
Anchor(s) to be used

Locations of permanent and improvised (if used) anchors, any special requirements such as connecting hardware, type, thickness, and condition of material to which the anchor is connected to ensure minimum required strength, etc. The employer should ensure the site has adequate anchor points to minimize the possibility of a worker experiencing a swing fall.



Clearance requirement

This must be calculated (you can use the worksheet below for convenience). The distance the worker falls must be less than the distance to the ground or an object or level below the work area (such as a balcony, mezzanine, or HVAC ducting).



CALCULATE REQUIRED CLEARANCE

A Distance from anchor to rope grab, plus length of lanyard: _____

B Length of shock absorber extended – typically 1.1m (3.6') or 1.75m (5.7'), depending on the absorber: _____

C D-ring slippage and harness stretch – 0.3m (1') minimum: _____

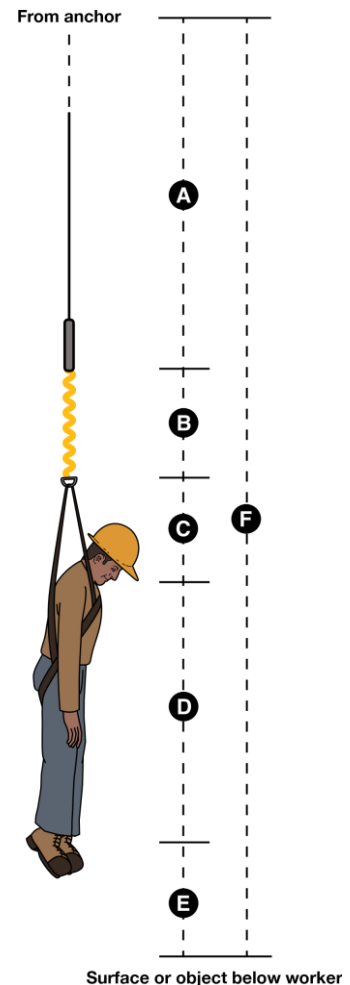
D Height of worker's D-ring from foot level – typically 1.5m (5'), but can be longer for taller workers: _____

E Safety factor – minimum 0.6m (2'): _____

F SUM OF A + B + C + D + E

(Clearance required – i.e. minimum distance from anchor point to nearest surface or object below worker): _____

NOTE: The actual distance to the surface or object below must be greater than the clearance required. If not, a falling worker will strike that lower surface or object. A different anchor location or type of fall protection system may be required.



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Procedures to assemble, maintain, inspect, use and disassemble the fall protection system

Procedures for simple systems can be listed here. For complex systems, it is acceptable to reference procedures that appear elsewhere as a separate document. The procedures must be readily available for reference at the work site. This can mean a paper copy of the instructions on site or an electronic copy that is downloaded to a tablet, laptop, or smartphone. The information must be retrievable without an internet connection so that the person needing it has access to it at all times.

Rescue procedures

List the rescue procedures that are in place to quickly return a worker to safety if the worker is left suspended as a result of a fall.

Worker sign-off

The employer must ensure all workers affected by this fall protection plan have reviewed it. As an example of a way to fulfil that requirement, this template asks workers to sign off on the plan. However, employers are free to determine the best way to fulfil this requirement at their particular work site.

Worker Name: _____ Signature: _____

Worker Name: _____ Signature: _____

Worker Name: _____ Signature: _____

Worker Name: _____ Signature: _____

This template is for example purposes only. Completing this template alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. Neither the Crown, nor its agents, employees, or contractors, will be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this template.