



# DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY, SUSTAINABILITY & RISK

## Fall Protection Fact Sheet

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The University of Maryland is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of recognized hazards and to make sure Students, Faculty and Staff who **work from heights** with unprotected sides or edges greater than the applicable OSHA Standards receive Fall Protection Training. OSHA's Industrial Standard requires Fall Protection when working from heights greater than four feet and the Construction Standard requires Fall Protection when working from heights greater than six feet above a lower level. Our Occupational Safety and Health Department offers Fall Protection Awareness Training in Conjunction with Ladder Safety Training to Students, Faculty and Staff. Contractors are required to receive Fall Protection Training through an accredited training provider, produce training certificates and have a Fall Protection Program.

### **Unprotected Sides and Edges on a Walking/Working Surface**

Any worker on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is greater than the applicable OSHA Standard (4 or 6 feet) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of a guardrail system or personal fall arrest system.

### **What are Guardrails?**

A guardrail is a barrier erected to prevent people from falling to lower level. The top rail must be between 39-42 inches, have a midrail and be able to withstand 200 pounds of outward force. Guardrail systems must have a toe board when used in construction to protect bystanders below from falling objects. Engineered Guardrail Systems are our preferred means of Fall Protection. Guardrails serve as Fall Protection on scaffolding and scissor lifts.

### **What are Personal Fall Arrest Systems?**

A Personal Fall Arrest System is a type of Personal Protective Equipment with a combination of components that together will arrest a person's fall when working from heights and come in a variety of configurations. Personal Fall Arrest Systems typically consists of an anchor point, connecting device, full body harness and include a lanyard, deceleration device, lifeline or a combination of the above. Additional practical and classroom training are required to use a Personal Fall Arrest Systems.

### **What are some of the Exceptions to Fall Protection?**

Fall protection is not required when working from a stable, portable step or extension ladders, working side of a loading dock, exposed sides of a perforce stage, fixed vertical ladder 20 feet or less from a lower surface and may work on scaffolding ten feet or less but prefer using guardrails.

Contact Michael Stumpo of ESSR's Occupational Safety and Health Unit at 301-405-3982 or email [mstumpo@umd.edu](mailto:mstumpo@umd.edu) for questions on implementing the program in your Department or to schedule Fall Protection Awareness/Ladder Safety Training.

### **Applicable Regulations**

**29 CFR 1926.501 Construction Fall Protection General Requirements**

**29 CFR 1910.132 General Industry Fall Protection General Requirements**