

Falling and Flying Objects

Week Number 9 (February 26—March 4)

The following five situations are commonly associated with injuries as a result of falling or flying objects. Often injuries occur because someone other than the victim is working unsafely. OSHA has identified falling and flying objects as one of the four greatest causes of injuries and deaths in construction. You can keep yourself safe by developing defensive habits to use in potentially hazardous situations.

Cranes and Hoists

When you are working in an area where cranes and hoists are frequently used, you should always wear head protection. Always look up to see if a load is being moved and avoid walking underneath it. Make sure to warn co-workers of overhead loads as well. A load could break loose at any time.

If you are rigging up loads, make sure to inspect the rigging equipment for damage or wear. Also make sure you are using the proper equipment for the load. Wire rope, slings, hooks, and chains all have maximum capacity ratings that must never be exceeded.

Storage

Objects should be stored safely to prevent them from falling. If shelves or storage racks are used, check them for defects. If a defect exists, do not use the shelf. Store heavy and bulky objects close to the floor and lighter, smaller objects up higher. Position objects securely on shelves or racks so they won't shift and fall off. Some racks and shelves should be secured to the floor, ceiling or wall to prevent tipping.

Overhead Work

If overhead work is being performed, there is always a chance that objects may fall. Set-up barriers and post signs below locations where overhead work is being done to prevent people from entering the area. When one employee is on a ladder and another is holding it, the person on the ladder should make every effort to secure tools and materials so they don't fall and hit the person below. The person holding the ladder should be wearing personal protective equipment, such as a hard hat, to prevent injury.

Grinding

Before starting a grinding operation, inspect the guards on the grinder to be sure they are in good condition, securely fastened, and properly adjusted. These guards protect the operator as well as others working in the area. Eye and face protection are essential to avoid particles that may be thrown and cause injury to the operator. Be sure that the object you are grinding is tightly secured so that it will not fly into the air and injure someone.

Cleaning with Compressed Air

Compressed air can be extremely dangerous if it is used to clean. It can cause particles to fly through the air with great force and cause injury. Compressed air used for cleaning should have pressure of less than 30 pounds per square inch and should only be used when bystanders are out of the way and personal protective equipment is worn. Never clean clothing with compressed air, as oxygen can get trapped in the fibers of clothing. In that case, a simple spark igniting could engulf you in flames.