

Edges and openings: plan fall protection first

Talk 04 of 52 | Week 4 | Working at height

Leader: adapt this talk to today's electrical work and site procedures. See the educational-use and liability notice on page 2.

START THE CONVERSATION

A floor opening or unprotected edge may appear after another trade changes the work area. Yesterday's safe route is not proof that the route is safe today.

KEY TALKING POINTS

1. Identify openings, edges, fragile surfaces, and changes in level before starting. Use the protection required for the specific activity.
2. Many construction fall-protection provisions use a six-foot threshold, but rules differ for ladders, scaffolds, and other work. Do not apply one height rule to every task.
3. Do not move guardrails or covers without authorization and an approved alternative protection plan. Report missing or damaged protection immediately.
4. Where personal fall-arrest equipment is selected, workers need training, suitable equipment and anchorage, and a rescue plan. Do not improvise an anchorage.
5. Electrical job example: the cable-tray route passes near a shaft opening, and material is being lifted between floors. Ask the crew to identify the fall exposure before discussing how quickly the tray can be installed. The work plan must account for people carrying long sections and changes created by nearby trades.
6. Check coordination at the start of the shift and after work changes. Determine who controls covers and barriers, who approves their temporary removal, and who restores protection. Do not accept a verbal assumption that another contractor has taken responsibility; establish a clear contact and communicate the protected route.
7. Walk through a stop-work example: a planned attachment point or guardrail is missing when the crew arrives. The task waits while the responsible person reassesses the method. Include how help would reach the location in an emergency; a rescue plan must be practical for the actual floor, access route, and crew.

ASK THE CREW

1. Where are today's edges and openings?
2. Who handles a missing cover or guardrail?

BEFORE WORK STARTS

Review the work-area protection and rescue arrangements with the responsible supervisor.

OSHA SOURCES / FURTHER READING

OSHA: Fall protection overview

Attendance & action record

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Date: _____ Leader: _____

Company / jobsite: _____

Site hazards and controls discussed:

Follow-up action / responsible person / due date:

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Participant name	Signature / acknowledgment

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