

Working at heights refers to any task performed in an area where there is a risk of falling a distance that could lead to personal injury. In Saskatchewan's construction sector, falls from heights accounted for 285 cases requiring medical aid in 2022. This statistic shows the importance of following proper procedures when working at heights.

### Identifying Hazards

Several hazards are common when working at heights, including:

- Potential falls from ladders
- Risk of slipping or falling from sloped roofs
- Exposure to adverse weather conditions such as rain, ice, snow and wind
- Inadequate or unstable work platforms
- The presence of overhead electrical lines
- Hazards posed by dropped tools and materials

### Considerations for Working at Heights

When undertaking work at elevated positions, various factors warrant consideration to ensure safety and prevent falls. Here are several strategies to mitigate risks:

- Utilize appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) tailored to the specific job requirements, such as lifelines, retractable, harnesses and lanyards.
- Ensure anchor systems meet applicable Saskatchewan Regulations; fall arrest systems should meet a 5,000 lbs standard, while travel restraint systems should be 2,000 lbs for permanent and 800 lbs for temporary use per attached worker.
- Explore ways to eliminate hazards, like constructing structures on the ground and later positioning them via cranes for tasks involving roof systems or exterior walls.
- Use extended tools to reach higher areas safely.
- Consider using Aerial Work Platforms (AWP) or scaffolding to enhance safety.
- Ensure proper ladder usage by securing them at the top and bottom, maintaining three-point contact and staying within the ladder rails.
- Comply with Provincial Regulations by installing adequate hole coverings, guardrails and toe boards.
- Establish control zones around work areas for added safety measures.




### Preparation Before Working at Heights

Before beginning work at heights, several crucial tasks must be completed to ensure safe working conditions:

- Develop a comprehensive fall protection plan if workers are operating at heights of 3 metres (10 feet) or more. Have all workers review and sign off on the plan prior to beginning work.
- Provide fall protection training to all personnel involved.
- Conduct thorough inspections of all PPE before each use to ensure functionality and safety.
- Inspect Aerial Work Platforms (AWP) and scaffolding before use to verify their structural integrity.
- Perform a detailed job site inspection and undertake a hazard assessment collectively as a crew to identify and address potential risks.

By following these measures and being proactive in identifying and controlling potential hazards, we ensure a safer working environment when operating at heights.

For more information please see: sections 7-16, 7-21, 9-2 and 9-2 of the Saskatchewan Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020

- **1 Hazard Elimination**  
Preferred solution is to eliminate exposure to the fall hazard.
- **2 Passive Fall Protection**  
Physical barriers, like guardrails around unprotected edges and covers over holes.
- **3 Fall Restraint Systems**  
Use personal protective equipment to restrict the worker's range of movement so they cannot fall.
- **4 Fall Arrest Systems**  
Use personal protective equipment to arrest a fall within acceptable force and clearance margins.
- **5 Administrative Controls**  
Least preferred solution is work practices of procedures that increase a worker's awareness of a fall hazard.

References: [https://deltaprevention.com/wp-content/uploads/DLT18002\\_Catalogue\\_Delta\\_2019\\_EN\\_WEB-3.pdf](https://deltaprevention.com/wp-content/uploads/DLT18002_Catalogue_Delta_2019_EN_WEB-3.pdf)