

VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTER
Martinsburg, West Virginia

FACILITY MANAGEMENT SERVICE
No. SH-18
November 2014

FALL PROTECTION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. **PURPOSE:** To ensure employees follow standards outlined within MCM 001S-29 establishing minimum fall protection practices.
2. **POLICY:** It is the policy of FMS to reduce the probability of injuries to employees while working at heights.
3. **PROCEDURES:**
 - A. **Training:** All employees who may be exposed to fall hazards are required to receive training on how to recognize such hazards, and how to minimize their exposure to them. Employees shall receive training as soon after employment as possible, and before they are required to work in areas where fall hazards exist. All employees will receive Fall Protection Awareness training annually. This training will be developed by the Safety Office with the assistance of the Education Office.

A record of employees who have received training and training dates shall be maintained in LMS by the Safety Office. Training of employees by in-house and outside sources shall include:

- a. Nature of fall hazards employees may be exposed to.
- b. Correct procedures for erecting, maintaining, disassembling and inspecting fall protection systems.
- c. Use and operation of controlled access zone, guardrail, personal fall arrest, safety net, warning line and safety monitoring systems.
- d. Role of each employee in the Safety Monitoring System (if one is used).
- e. Limitations on the use of mechanical equipment during roofing work on low-slope roofs (if applicable).
- f. Correct procedures for equipment and materials handling, and storage and erection of overhead protection.
- g. Role of each employee in alternative Fall Protection Plans (if used).
- h. Requirements of the OSHA Fall Protection Standard, 29 CFR 1926, Subpart M.
- i. VAMC Martinsburg, WV requirements for reporting incidents that cause injury to an employee.

Additional training shall be provided on an annual basis, or as needed when changes are made to fall protection program or standards, or as fall protection equipment is acquired.

- B. **General Fall Protection Requirements:** Persons working heights shall evaluate the need for fall protection before starting the task. Persons working at heights of six feet or greater shall be protected by a Fall Protection System (i.e. standard rail, warning line and safety monitoring system.) If such fall protection systems are infeasible, then a Personal Fall Arrest System must be used.

Tasks which pose a threat of falling onto equipment or machinery shall be protected by a Fall Protection System or a Personal Fall Arrest System regardless of the potential free fall distance.

- C. **Personal Fall Protection Systems:** Attachments to this SOP list fall protection and prevention systems, including descriptions of various aerial lifts, scaffolds and other devices on station and the safety considerations that must be followed when using this equipment. FMS will update this listing when new equipment is acquired and when equipment is removed from service. This SOP will be reviewed annually and when new standards are issued by OSHA to ensure it is current.

It will be a mandatory element of reading and understanding, and will be reviewed annually by each employed who is authorized to utilize the equipment as part of their competency documentation.

The following are general requirements which apply to all personal fall arrest equipment.

- a. Personal fall arrest equipment is to be used by trained personnel only.
 - b. Persons using personal fall arrest equipment must read and understand all manufacturer instructions.
 - c. Personal fall arrest equipment is to be tested as a system. Therefore, mixing equipment from different manufacturers is prohibited.
 - d. All personal fall arrest equipment must be visually inspected prior to each use.
 - e. Employees are not to alter their personal fall arrest equipment in any way.
 - f. Fall arrest equipment is not to be used for hoisting, towing, or any other purpose other than that for which it is designed.
 - g. Maximum working load for fall arrest equipment is 310 pounds including the weight of tools and equipment that the wearer is holding.
- D. **Tasks and Work Areas Requiring Fall Protection:** The FMS Supervisor shall evaluate the worksite(s) to determine the specific type(s) of fall protection to be used in the various situations. Attachments to this SOP list possible tasks and specified fall protection guidelines for each.
- E. **Fall Protection Plan:** A Fall Protection Plan must be completed for each applicable project to identify exposures for fall hazards. The fall protection plan addresses the use of conventional fall protection at a number of areas on the project, and identifies specific activities that require non-conventional means of fall protection. The plan is designed to convey to employees the hazards and the required actions to be taken to eliminate or mitigate the fall hazards associated with a specific job and to establish safe procedures to prevent falls to lower levels through holes and openings in walking/working surfaces, from working at elevations above the ground or other hazards. A template for Fall Protection Plans is attached. Any changes to the fall protection plan must be approved by the Safety Manager, and Chief, FMS.
- F. **Rescue Plans:** Always consider rescue means prior to working at heights. For example, ensure a scissor lift, ladder or some other means is available for rescue; make sure a clear path is available for rescue operations.
- G. **Accident Investigations:** In the event of an accident or near miss, the employee shall report the incident to their supervisor. The supervisor is to contact the VAMC Safety Office to conduct an accident evaluation.
- H. **Enforcement:** Constant awareness of and respect for fall hazards, as well as compliance with all safety rules, are considered conditions of employment with VAMC Martinsburg, WV. The FMS Supervisor or VAMC Safety Office reserves the right to stop work when unsafe working conditions exist.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

- A. **Service Chief, or designee** – will promote and enforce the measures and procedures identified by the Fall Protection Policy; promote good, safe work practices, with the essential goal of the prevention of accidents and employee injury. This includes the establishment of appropriate safe work procedures and the training of every employee at the time of initial assignment and with refresher training as appropriate.
- B. **Safety Office** – will ensure regulatory compliance and provide training as required.

- C. **Supervisors** – ensure their employees use safety procedures required in the performance of their assigned tasks. Ensure proper safety equipment is available for employees.
- D. **Employees** – are required to adhere to the established safe work procedures and encouraged to assist in the promotion of the fall protection program.

REFERENCE:

29 CFR 1926, Subpart M
29 CFR 1910 Subpart D
29 CFR 1910 Subpart F
29 CFR 1910 Subpart F, Appendix A and C
29 CFR 1926 Subpart L
29 CFR 1910 Subpart R
29 CFR 1026 Subpart X
OSHA - STD 03-11-002
FMS SH- 17 Trenching and Excavation Safety Policy
MCM 001S-29 Fall Protection Policy

- 5. RESCISSION: None.
- 6. DISTRIBUTION: B
- 7. ATTACHMENT: 1. Template for Fall Protection Plans


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Chief, FMS

TEMPLATE FOR FALL PROTECTION PLANS

Job Location:	
Date Plan Prepared:	
Description of task or exposure:	
Dates of project:	
Date Plan Modified:	
Plan Prepared by (Competent Person / Qualified Person):	
Plan Approved by (Competent Person / Qualified Person):	
Plan Supervised by (Competent Person / Qualified Person):	

The plan shall describe, in detail, the specific practices, equipment and methods used to protect workers from falling to lower level. This plan shall be updated as conditions change.

Duties and Responsibilities:

Identify Competent and Qualified Persons for fall protection and their responsibilities and qualifications.

**Competent Person
on the Job Site:**

Training Date:

**Responsibilities:
Qualified Person
on the Job Site:**

Training Date:

Responsibilities:

Description of the project or task to be performed:

Anticipated hazards:

Fall hazard prevention and control:

Training requirements on specific equipment and fall protection or fall arrest devices (discuss training on new equipment; when training was conducted on existing equipment – by individual on the job and the date)

First Aid / Rescue plan and procedures:

Design of anchorages/fall arrest and horizontal lifeline systems and individual responsible for certification that the anchorages and lifelines meet structural and performance requirements:

Inspection, maintenance and storage of fall protection equipment (whose responsibility; frequency; written records):

Incident investigation procedures for near misses and incidents:

Evaluation of program effectiveness at completion of task / project with lessons learned:

Inspection and oversight methods to be employed to ensure fall protection, fall arrest, warning lines, and other elements of the fall protection program are properly utilized: