

Safe Falling Objects on the Job

Tools and other objects dropped from higher levels are serious hazards on all jobsites. In 2016 alone, there were 255 reported workplace fatalities due to falling objects according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In addition, it is estimated that over 50,000 incidents related to falling objects occur each year.

What steps can we take to eliminate these numbers?

Eliminate the Hazard

- Remove objects from higher levels such as scaffolding and aerial lifts if they are not required.
- While conducting pre-use inspections of scaffolding, be sure to look out for and remove objects which pose a hazard to those below.
- After each shift, clear material, tools, and other debris from ladders, scaffolding, and other elevated surfaces.
- Maintain good housekeeping practices.

Effective Controls

Effective controls to prevent injuries can include:

- Barricade work zones and walking paths below overhead work areas to prevent workers from walking into a hazardous area where they may be exposed to falling objects.
- Ensure toe boards are in place and in good condition where necessary.
- Place debris nets or other protective barriers above areas where there are employees working below.
- Use tethers and/or anchors for tools being used on a higher level, like the one pictured.



Personal Protective Equipment



- Hardhats are required in all areas where overhead hazards are present.
- Do not only rely on hardhats! Implement elimination, engineering, and administrative controls to more effectively prevent falling objects.