

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH



JUNE 2020

Signal Administration: Preventing Falls in the Workplace



Year after year, falls account for over 40 percent of maritime injuries, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that Maritime Workers suffer injuries at double the rate of all other industries; additionally, the National Safety Council states that falls are the second leading cause of workplace deaths following highway crashes. Falls are separated into two categories: Same Level Falls and Falls from Elevation; all of which are preventable. The

National Safety Council, Centers for Disease Control, Occupational Safety and Health Administration and other affiliates have all released fall prevention publications to keep you informed and educated on where to go for assistance.

Employers must set up the workplace to prevent employees from falling off of overhead platforms, elevated work stations or into holes in the floor and walls. OSHA requires that fall protection be provided at elevations of four feet in general industry workplaces, five feet in shipyards, six feet in the construction industry and eight feet in longshoring operations. In addition, OSHA requires that fall protection be provided when working over dangerous equipment and machinery, regardless of the fall distance.

To prevent employees from being injured from falls, employers must:

- Guard every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk (using a railing and toe-board or a floor hole cover).
- Provide a guard rail and toe-board around every elevated open sided platform, floor or runway.
- Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat of acid or a conveyor belt) employers must provide guardrails and toe-boards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- Other means of fall protection that may be required on certain jobs include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railings and hand rails.

Let's face it, we are all fallible, even the best people make mistakes. As such, it is even more important that controls are implemented, maintained and that we watch for each other. A short video on Slips, Trips, and Falls can be found [here](#).

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Justin has over 15 years of trade, safety, health, and environmental experience in maritime, construction, and general industries. Since 2020, he has been providing safety and loss control services to Signal Mutual Members, Justin's area of service is Charleston, South Carolina. Justin is an OSHA authorized maritime trainer and an active member of SSPC, NFPA and AIHA.

