

 Portland Community College Health and Safety Manual	Dept: Environmental Health and Safety	
	Topic: Chapter 20 - Fall Protection Program	
	Board Policy: B507	Revised Date: September 2024

Authority	PCC Board Policy - B507
	Portland Community College is committed to providing a safe and healthy work and educational environment for our employees, students and visitors.

Summary	It is the College’s goal to reduce, or eliminate, workplace accidents and injuries resulting from falls at height. This policy describes fall protection safeguards to reduce the potential of an accident, injury, or fatality resulting from a fall.
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I. PURPOSE.

Portland Community College (PCC) is committed to reducing the risk of injury or fatality from exposure to unguarded elevated surfaces at heights of four (4) feet or more with the implementation of this Fall Protection Program. Where there is a potential for a fall onto or into dangerous equipment or objects, fall protection is required regardless of the distance to the next lower surface and without regard to the type of work being performed. Safeguards will also be implemented to protect persons and property from exposure to falling objects.

Employees who do not follow the procedures in this program bring increased risk of serious injury to themselves, their coworkers, and the PCC community. PCC considers violations of fall protection procedures to be serious infractions, subject to disciplinary action.

It is PCC's goal to eliminate all preventable injuries from falls using the methods provided in the hierarchy of fall protection controls and PCC's Fall Protection Program.

II. AUTHORITY

PCC Board Policy - B507

OR-OSHA Division 2/D Walking-Working Surfaces

OR-OSHA Division 2/I Personal Protective Equipment

OR-OSHA Division 3/M Fall Protection

OR-OSHA Division 4/D Work Surfaces

OR-OSHA Division 4/I Protective Equipment

Classified Agreement - Article 9, Health and Safety

Faculty and Academic Professional Agreement - Article 27 Health and Safety

III. RESPONSIBILITY

A. Affected Employees:

- Completing PCC's Fall Protection training and understanding the procedures provided in this program.
- Using appropriate fall protection, including falling object protection, when working in areas with fall hazards.
- Staying within guardrail systems or designated areas unless using personal fall restraint systems or personal fall arrest systems, in compliance with the requirements of a completed *Form 1: Fall Protection Work Plan*.
- Properly maintaining, using, and inspecting assigned fall protection equipment before any work at height is to be performed.
- Reporting any unsafe conditions or unsafe behavior to a supervisor or by means of PCC's *Hazardous Condition Report*.

B. Managers/Supervisors:

- Providing a safe work environment for their employees by following health and safety policies and procedures.
- Completing PCC's Fall Protection training and understanding the procedures provided in this program.
- Serving as a competent person (see *Appendix A – Definitions*) and being

responsible for identifying any existing or potential fall hazards, including falling object exposures.

- Identifying the necessary personal fall protection equipment required for working in fall hazard situations, if both eliminating the fall hazard and engineering controls are not an option.
- Completing *Form 1: Fall Protection Work Plan* for all tasks where employees are working at height.
- Inspecting their employees' fall protection equipment every 6 months and completing *Form 2: Personal Fall Restraint and Personal Fall Arrest System Inspections*.

C. Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S):

- Reviewing and maintaining this program to ensure compliance with all applicable federal and state regulations as well as industry best practices.
- Providing training and guidance regarding methods of compliance as it pertains to fall protection.
- Issuing an initial lanyard and full body harness to supervisors and employees during PCC's in-person fall protection training and ensuring each user has been properly fitted and trained on using the provided equipment.
- Halting any unsafe work practice when there is clear disregard for any procedure provided in this program to ensure the safety of the employee and the PCC community.

D. Planning and Capital Construction (P&CC):

- Ensure contractors have an appropriate fall protection work plan in place before performing work from elevated surfaces on all PCC campuses and centers.

IV. PROCEDURES

All work performed on walking and working surfaces at a height greater than 4 feet, including roofs, building ledges, and other work surfaces shall be assessed, and all fall hazards controlled in accordance with the following procedures.

A. Fall Hazard Identification & Assessment

At PCC, supervisors are required to identify and assess all fall hazards in their work areas. The following are common fall hazards that PCC employees may encounter in their daily work:

- Sloped roofs; steep (greater than 4:12 pitch) or low (less than 4:12 pitch)
- Sharp roof edges
- Elevator shafts
- Excavation/trenches
- Loading docks
- Floor/wall openings and windows
- Ladders
- Stairways
- Scaffolds
- Skylights
- Falling objects/debris
- Working above hazardous processes or equipment

Once all fall hazards have been identified for a work area or task, managers should assess the factors impacting the fall hazard. This can include information about distance

to the fall hazard, frequency of exposure to the fall hazard, duration of exposure to the fall hazard, how many employees are affected, and if there are any other conditions that can impact the work. All of these factors can inform what type of fall protection is the most effective for protecting employees.

B. Fall Protection Controls

The table found in *Appendix B - Hierarchy of Fall Protection Controls* provides additional information about the fall protection methods listed below including the priority given to each control measure. When considering what type of fall protection to use, the following hierarchy of controls, in order of preference, should be considered:

1. Eliminate the Hazard - Bring the work down to ground level or change the task, process, or equipment to prevent the employee from being exposed to a fall hazard.
2. Passive Fall Protection - Consists of engineering controls, which protect the worker from exposure to potential falls. These include temporary or permanent measures such as:
 - a. Guardrails Systems: a temporary or permanent barrier erected to prevent workers from falling to lower levels. Guardrail systems consist of a top rail, mid-rail, and toe board or screens at leading edges, wall openings or around holes. If work must be done beyond the guardrail or at elevation adjacent to the guardrail, additional fall protection is required. Additional specifications for guardrail systems can be found in *Appendix C - Requirements for Guardrail Systems and Hole Covers*.
 - b. Hole Covers: used to close off holes along a walking working surface to prevent fall hazards to a lower level. If covers are opened or removed, alternative fall protection must be provided. Additional specifications for hole covers can be found in *Appendix C - Requirements for Guardrail Systems and Hole Covers*.
 - c. Skylight screens: a means of passive fall protection, acting as a physical barrier between the fall hazard and the occupant on the roof while also providing falling object protection to people below the skylights.
3. Active Fall Protection - Requires some level of active employee engagement and training on specific elements.
 - a. Personal Fall Restraint System (PFRS): uses a combination of an anchorage point, lanyard and fall protection harness to eliminate the possibility of an employee going over the edge of a walking-working surface. The anchor is typically a purpose built, fixed point such as a davit, or a structural component of the building. The fall restraint system must be configured so the employee cannot fall from the working surface. Specifications for personal fall restraint systems can be found in *Appendix E – Requirements for Personal Fall Restraint and Personal Fall Arrest Systems*.

- b. Personal Fall Arrest System (PFAS): similar to personal fall restraint systems in that they feature an anchorage point, a lanyard, and a fall protection harness, but they do not prevent falls. They limit the extent of a fall after it has occurred. They must be configured so that the worker's free fall is limited, they cannot strike the working surface below, and they cannot strike objects between the surface where they are working and the working surface below.

Prior to tying off to perform the work, a means to rescue any fallen worker must be immediately available. This must include an adequate rescue plan, which is documented in *Form 1: Fall Protection Work Plan*.

Specifications for personal fall arrest systems can be found in *Appendix E - Requirements for Personal Fall Restraint and Personal Fall Arrest Systems*.

- 4. Administrative Controls - Work practices or procedures that increase the employee's awareness of the fall hazard. This is the least preferred method of protection because it does not provide a physical barrier and relies heavily on employee behavior. These controls include:
 - a. Designated Areas: the use of warning lines to notify employees of fall exposure. Designated areas may only be used on low-sloped roofs (pitch of less than or equal to 2:12). The distance the lines need to be from the potential fall exposure is based on the frequency and duration of the work.

Personnel must stay behind the warning line and within the designated area for the system to be effective. If work must be done beyond the warning line, additional fall protection is required.

Specifications for warning lines used to define designated areas can be found in *Appendix D – Requirements for Designated Areas*.

C. Fall Protection Work Plan

Managers are required to complete a written *Form 1 - Fall Protection Work Plan* (FPWP) whenever fall protection is required for work performed on elevated work surfaces. A copy of the completed FPWP must be attached to the work order and a copy sent to EH&S. Departments must retain copies of the completed forms in the departmental file. Please note that the completed forms are subject to review by personnel from the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OR-OSHA) and EH&S.

The FPWP must be completed on a task-by-task basis to address, in writing, applicable site-specific roof and fall hazards and identify appropriate fall protection for worker safety.

1. Job Specific Information: Identify the location, dates and project information.
2. Potential Fall Hazards: Establish the potential fall hazards associated with the work on roofs or open-sided floors for: platforms, floor openings, trenches, wall openings, roof hatches, skylights, and surfaces that don't meet walking/working surfaces requirements.

3. Details of the Fall Hazard(s): Describe in writing the fall hazards that were previously marked in section 2. This allows the supervisor to include further fall hazard details involving the associated work.
4. Fall Protection Systems to be Used: Identify what methods will be used as necessary fall protection. Options include, but are not limited to: elimination, guardrails, designated areas, covers, scaffold with guardrails, lifting equipment, personal fall arrest equipment, and personal fall restraint equipment.
5. Procedures that will be Implemented for the Fall Protection Systems Used: Detail the assembly, maintenance, inspection, and disassembly of the fall protection systems that will be used. This could include assembling of temporary guardrails, inspection of PFRS or PFAS equipment before beginning work, where a scissor lift will be placed, etc.
6. Overhead Protection: Identify what protections will be in place to prevent falling object hazards from occurring.
7. Procedures used for Securing Items: Describe the procedures that will be implemented for storing, handling, and securing tools and materials that will be used for the job and preventing them from falling to a lower level.
8. Rescue Plan: Detail the contact information, procedures, and rescue equipment that will be utilized in the event of a fall while using PFAS. Includes calculation of the fall distance, what equipment is needed, methods of communication, and other information that may be needed in an emergency.
9. Employee and Supervisor Agreement: Employees and supervisors each sign acknowledging they agree to the systems and procedures specified in the FPWP. Only employees that have taken Fall Protection training may access an elevated location.

D. Inspections

1. Walking and Working Surfaces - In areas where fall hazards are present, walking and working surfaces must be inspected, regularly and as necessary, by supervisors, and maintained in a safe condition.

Hazardous conditions on walking/working surfaces shall be corrected or repaired before an employee uses the walking/working surface again. If the correction or repair cannot be made immediately, the hazard must be guarded to prevent employees from using the walking/working surface until the hazard is corrected.

When any correction or repair involves the structural integrity of the walking/working surface, a qualified person performs or supervises the correction or repair.

2. Personal Fall Restraint Systems and Personal Fall Arrest Systems - The components of a PFRS or PFAS must be inspected by the employee using the equipment before each use. Employees can use *Appendix F: Pre-Work Body Harness and Lanyard Inspection* for guidance on what to inspect.

All PFRS / PFAS equipment (harness, lanyard, and/or lifeline/rope) must be inspected by a competent person every 6 months according to manufacturer's directions. Managers must utilize *Form 2 – Personal Fall Restraint System & Personal Fall Arrest System Inspection* to document the condition of equipment issued to their employees. The calendar tag on the harness/lanyard must also be marked, initialed, and dated, or punched indicating the date/month inspection has been performed.

If defective equipment is found it must be immediately taken out of service, sent to the manufacturer for repair or delivered to EH&S for disposal.

V. TRAINING

Each employee who may be exposed to fall hazards shall be trained on the contents of this program, how to recognize fall hazards, and the procedures necessary in order to minimize these hazards.

EH&S will facilitate the development of general Fall Protection training that will be available to all employees through MyCareer@PCC.

Departments must provide additional training specific to the work tasks and equipment that each employee will encounter, including:

- Fall hazards in the work area;
- Correct procedures for erecting, maintaining, disassembling and inspecting the fall protection systems used;
- Selection, proper use, and care of equipment comprising a personal fall arrest system (PFAS) or a personal fall restraint system (PFRS);
- Role of employees in fall protection procedures; and
- Rescue procedures to follow in case of a fall.

If there is a change in the fall protection system being used, or if an employee's actions demonstrate that the employee has not retained the understanding or skills important for safety working at height with fall protection, additional training, or retraining, will be administered.

VI. RECORDKEEPING

Fall Protection Work Plans will be maintained by the department and attached to the corresponding work order.

Inspection records will be maintained by the department.

Training records shall be maintained in PCC's learning management software or by the department.