

Leadership Bulletin: Fall Protection – Safety at Heights



In 2024, 25% of all Serious Injury and Fatality (SIF) events in our Partnership resulted from falls from elevations. Of the 52 total SIF events recorded, 13 were directly related to falls, representing our single largest injury category. These incidents occurred across multiple work scenarios:

- 5 events involving equipment
- 3 events during bucket truck access/egress
- 3 events on poles
- 2 events involving alort and aerial lift operations

The data is clear: Fall protection remains our most critical safety challenge.

Your Leadership Role

As a leader, your commitment to fall protection directly impacts whether workers return home safely each day. The Q1 2026 refresher training has equipped your teams with technical knowledge, now they need your visible, consistent support to apply it.

Essential Leadership Actions:

- **Reinforce “Ground-to-Ground” Engagement** – Fall Protection Equipment (FPE) must be engaged from the moment workers begin ascending until they return to ground level. This is non-negotiable.
- **Ensure Pre-Work Planning** – Verify that fall protection plans are developed and discussed during job briefings. Every aerial work task requires assessment of fall hazards, identification of anchorage points, and confirmation of rescue procedures.
- **Validate Equipment Inspections** – FPE and Work Positioning Equipment (WPE) must be inspected before each use. Spot-check that inspections are actually occurring, not just documented.
- **Confirm Qualifications** – Until employees demonstrate proficiency in climbing and fall protection use, they are not considered qualified. Ensure training is current and competency is verified.
- **Address Structure Integrity** – Wood poles and steel structures require visual inspection prior to and during climbing. Challenge your teams to assess adjacent poles that may be affected by load changes.

Critical Training Requirements

Your workforce must be trained by qualified trainers on:

- Care, use, and inspection of FPE/WPE
- Selection and safe use of equipment systems
- Rescue procedures specific to work locations
- Recognition of suspension trauma signs and symptoms



Retraining is required when:

- Workplace conditions change
- New types of fall protection equipment are introduced
- Inadequacies in knowledge or equipment use are identified

Rescue Preparedness

Suspension trauma can cause unconsciousness and death within 20-30 minutes. Every crew must have a rescue plan discussed and understood by all members before work begins. This includes:

- Self-rescue capabilities where applicable
- Assisted rescue procedures for crew members
- Minimizing suspension time in all scenarios

ACCOUNTABILITY STARTS WITH YOU

The Partnership's Safety at Heights Best Practice provides the framework—but leadership creates the culture. Your teams are watching how you prioritize fall protection in daily operations.

- Are you asking about fall protection plans during job briefings?
- Are you observing equipment inspections in the field?
- Are you stopping work when you see unsafe practices?

When you demonstrate that fall protection is a leadership priority, your workforce responds accordingly.

Immediate Actions

- Review the Q1 2026 refresher training completion status for your teams
- Observe at least one job briefing this week to verify fall protection planning
- Conduct spot-checks of FPE/WPE inspections during field visits
- Discuss rescue procedures with crews working at heights
- Recognize teams demonstrating excellence in fall protection practices

REMEMBER: 13 workers experienced serious injuries or fatalities from falls in 2024.

Behind each statistic is a person, a family, and a community affected by tragedy. These incidents were preventable.

Your leadership in reinforcing fall protection standards can eliminate these events in 2026 and beyond. The technical training has been delivered—now your visible commitment to these practices will determine whether we achieve zero fall-related injuries this year.