

Risk Management Brief



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Northwestern | Risk Management Services

OSHA Updates General Industry Fall Protection Standards

Risk Management Services is committed to keeping our community informed of regulatory updates that may affect academic and administrative operations. Because of this commitment, we want to provide guidance on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) new fall protection standard. According to OSHA, falls from heights are among the leading cause of serious work-related injuries and fatalities and the updated fall protection standard will provide better protection to workers, and offer employers greater flexibility when choosing fall protection systems.

OSHA's current fall protection standard recognizes guardrails as the only method to protect employees working at heights. On January 17th, 2017, the new standard will allow employers, such as Northwestern, to choose fall protection methods that best suit their needs. Examples include using guardrails, safety nets, personal fall arrest and positioning systems, or ladder safety systems.

To ensure that we meet with the new standard, Risk Management Services offers fall protection assessments and training for employees who are exposed to fall hazards. Fall protection assessments and training include reviewing the location of work, identifying factors that contribute to fall hazards, and providing fall protection solutions, such as guard rails, PPE, and recommendations for rescue at heights.

Key Dates for Additional Fall Protection Requirements Include:

- May 17th, 2017 Training employees exposed to fall hazards.
- November 20th, 2017 Inspecting facilities and anchorage points.
- November 19th, 2018 All new fixed ladders over 24 feet should be installed with ladder safety system.
All existing fixed ladders over 24 feet should be fitted with ladder safety systems, or cage.
- November 18th, 2036 Replace all cages with ladder safety systems on all fixed ladders over 24 feet.

For additional information on OSHA's updated walking-working surfaces standard and how to comply, please contact Gwen Butler at (847) 491-4936 or gwen.butler@northwestern.edu.