

Fall Protection

Did you know you can fall 4 feet in a half second and 16 feet in 1 second? Every year, slips, trips, and falls make up the second highest cause of fatal workplace injuries. While not every fall will result in a death, each slip, trip, or fall has the potential outcome of an injury or death. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2019, there were:

244,000 fall-related injuries requiring days off work.

Of those injuries, 880 resulted in death.

Over half were from less than 20 feet.

146 were falls to the same level.

Northwestern has a variety of fall hazards (e.g., rooftops, open access hatches, holes, slippery ground conditions), both indoors and outdoors, and students, faculty, and staff are at risk of falling daily. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) [Walking-Working Surfaces standard](#) requires fall protection for all fall hazards greater than 4 feet. To determine the best means of fall protection for fall hazards on campus, Risk Management utilizes the Fall Protection Hierarchy of Controls (see [Figure 1](#)).

Tips for Success When Talking to Your Team

Preparation is Key: Keep the topic relevant. Work with your team and Risk Management to assess fall hazards in your work area, and discuss how the hazards can be avoided.

Stay Positive: Keep the focus on what can be done to create a safe workplace instead of focusing on what has gone wrong in the past.

Share a Story, Ask for a Story: Storytelling is a powerful method to convey information. Stories from your employees make the topic even more relatable.

Fall Hazard Assessment

Risk Management's goal when conducting fall hazard assessments (see Northwestern's [Fall Protection Program](#)) is to select the most effective protective measures from the Hierarchy of Controls (see [Figure 1](#)) as possible (i.e., eliminate or shield fall hazards with covers or guardrails).

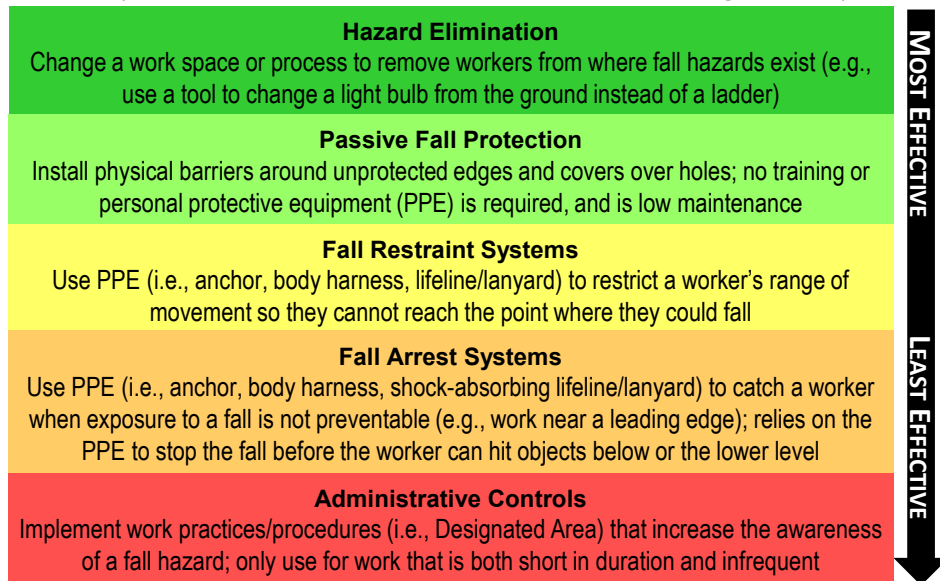


Figure 1: Fall Protection Hierarchy of Controls

Training

Training is essential for recognizing fall hazards and ensuring PPE is utilized properly. If you must use a fall restraint system, fall arrest system, or administrative controls for fall protection:

- You must complete Risk Management's [Authorized Person training](#), and
- Your supervisor must complete Risk Management's [Competent Person training](#).

If you discover fall hazards greater than 4 feet on campus, notify Risk Management so a fall hazard assessment can be conducted. This will help ensure everyone stays safe and is able to return home each day!

Report all injuries on Risk Management's [website](#) or call (847) 491-5582.

Learn more: Complete [Fall Protection training](#).

Safety at Home

Gravity is just as strong at home as it is at work! Since you probably do not have guardrails at home, keep your guard up instead while you perform projects around the home and yard.

- Use extension tools to change lightbulbs and clean gutters from the ground instead of climbing on ladders or accessing the roof.
- Always ensure steps are free of ice and toys, and a handrail is present.
- Consider adding motion sensors to ensure there is sufficient stairway light.

For additional information, contact Gwen Butler, Director, Environmental Health and Safety, at (847) 491-4936.