

### **What is a fall hazard?**

A fall hazard is anything in the workplace that could cause an unintended loss of balance or bodily support and result in a fall.

In 2005, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that 767 workers died in fatal falls. Falls from ladders and roofs still account for the majority of falls.

Table 1 shows that falls from Ladders, roofs, and scaffolds account for more than half of all disabling falls to lower levels.

**Table 1 Fall Statistics**

<b>Exposure</b>	<b>Number of claims</b>
Falls from ladders	687
Falls to lower level, unspecified	359
Falls from roof	279
Falls from scaffolds or staging	200
Falls from non moving vehicles	189
Falls from floors, docks, or ground level	181
Falls down stairs	132
Falls from structural steel	21
Falls from piled or stacked material	13
Total	2 061

### **What should you know about fall protection?**

If workers will be exposed to fall hazards that you can't eliminate, you will need to prevent falls from occurring or ensure that if workers do fall, they aren't injured. If you are at risk for falling two meters or more at your workplace, you should have a fall prevention plan in place.

Fall preventions means keeping accidents from happening. Using equipment like guardrails, stairs rails, travel restraint system, safety nets, **arrest systems (harness), self retracting lifelines/lanyards and ladder safety devices** to help us from falling and avoid injury.

### **Legislative requirements**

The OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT NO.85 OF 1993 provides for the health and safety of persons at work in South Africa. One of the provisions of the legislation requires an employer to protect workers against the risk of falling from heights. This legal requirement is

relatively simple with the minimum requirements for a fall arrest device effectively being a full body harness, a lanyard and a secure attachment point for the lanyard.  
Working at heights = working at 2 meters or more above the floor.