



# ALABAMA MUNICIPAL INSURANCE CORPORATION MUNICIPAL WORKERS COMPENSATION FUND, INC.



## Loss Control Division

### FALL PROTECTION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Department: \_\_\_\_\_ Person Conducting: \_\_\_\_\_

*Meeting Objective:* To familiarize employees with areas where fall hazards exist and to review steps and procedures to reduce fall hazards.

Sooner or later, most of us will experience that sudden, unanticipated descent in space driven by gravity - a fall. Although you may not realize it, falls are a leading cause of occupational fatalities in today's workplace second only to motor vehicle accidents. Why? Because nearly every industry, in one way or another, performs some type of task at an elevation, or some type of task that puts us at risk for a fall. The task could be as simple as climbing a step ladder to change a light bulb, or as complex as operating an industrial powered platform to wash the windows of a high-rise building. The following information describes safety precautions that should be used when at heights and on platforms or ladders.

#### **Fall Hazards**

1. Unguarded building perimeters.
2. Unguarded wall openings or floor holes.
3. Improperly installed, braced, planked or secured scaffolds.
4. Defective or improperly used ladders.
5. Reaching too far while on a ladder, scaffold or swing stage.
6. Horseplay, especially near building perimeters.
7. Climbing on construction rather than using scaffolds or ladders

#### **Fall Prevention Techniques and Devices**

##### **1. Building perimeters**

- a. Guard rails are vertical barriers of top rails, mid-rails, and intermediate structures such as balusters. The top edge of the guard rail should be at least 42 inches high (plus or minus 3 inches) and be at least 1/4 inch thick.
- b. The guard rail system must be free of anything that might cut or snag a worker's clothing. Steel or plastic banding is not permitted for the top rail or mid-rail.
- c. If wire rope is used for the top rail it must be marked at least every six feet with high visibility material.
- d. Where there is no parapet or wall at least 21 inches high, screens, mesh, mid-rails, or similar protection must be installed between the top edge of the guardrail system and the working surface. Mid-rails must be installed midway between the top edge of the guardrail system and the working surface. Screens and mesh must extend from the top rail to the working surface.
- e. Intermediate members such as balusters (vertical members) when used between post, must be no more than 19 inches apart.
- f. The guardrail must be capable of withstanding a 200 pound force applied within two inches of its top edge, in any outward or downward direction. Mid-rails, screens, and intermediate structural members must withstand at least 150 pounds applied in any downward or outward direction. Manila, plastic, or synthetic ropes used for top or mid-rails should be inspected frequently to ensure they meet the strength requirements.

##### **2. Covers**

Covers are rigid object used to overlay opening in floors, roofs, and other walking/working surfaces. Covers must be able to withstand at least twice the anticipated load of workers, equipment and materials. They should have full edge bearing on all four sides. All covers must be color coded or marked with the work "HOLE" or "COVER" and securely fastened to prevent accidental displacement.

**3. Scaffold Safety**

- a. Inspect all equipment before using. All scaffolding must be inspected daily by a properly trained, competent, and designated person. Never use any scaffolding that is damaged or has bent rails.
- b. Provide adequate sills for scaffold post and always use base plates.
- c. Plumb and level all scaffolds as the erection proceeds. Do not force braces to fit, level the scaffold until proper fit can be made. All scaffold erection and dismantling must be done under the supervision of a properly trained, competent and designated person.
- d. Use only lumber that is properly inspected and graded as scaffold plank. It should have at least 12 inches of overlap and extend 6 inches beyond the center of support if not cleared at both ends to prevent sliding off supports. The plank should be no less than 2x10 inches; rough dressed; seasoned; straight grained; and free of large, loose or grouped knots.
- e. Equip all planked or staged areas with proper guard rails and add toe boards when required. Platforms 10 feet off the ground must have guard rails with horizontal top rails and toe boards installed on all open sides and ends.
- f. Slippery conditions on scaffolds must be eliminated as soon as possible after they occur.
- g. All pole scaffolds must be securely guyed or tied to the building or structure. If the height or length exceeds 25 feet, the scaffold must be secured at least every 25 feet vertically and horizontally.

**4. Ladder Safety**

- a. Angle the ladder so that it has an approximate 4:1 slope and stands on a stable, level footing.
- b. Tie the ladder off to a secure anchor.
- c. Make sure the top of the ladder extends at least three feet above the leading edge of the access area.
- d. Keep ladders in good working condition.
- e. Keep your body close to the rungs and do not pull back when climbing a ladder.
- f. Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.
- g. Never tie two ladders together for added height.

*Review areas where fall hazards exist in your company. Go through an inspection of ladders, scaffolds and guard rails. Ask employees to review falling accidents or close calls that they are aware of and discuss what precautions could have been taken to avoid these and future occurrences.*

SIGNATURES OF ALL THOSE IN ATTENDANCE

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**NOTE:** This document is not intended to be legal advice. It does not identify all the issues surrounding the particular topic. Public agencies are encouraged to review their procedures with an expert or an attorney who is knowledgeable about the topic. Reliance on this information is at the sole risk of the user.<sup>1</sup>