There is no such thing as a *"minor fall"*

WorkSafeBC requires employers to provide fall protection systems for workers at three metres (10 feet) or more above the ground when not protected by guardrails. But did you know that the regulations also require the use of fall protection systems where falls from a lesser height could result in serious injury?

"Looking at a ladder as tall as I am, it may not seem that high or risky to climb it,," says Travis Robertson, a BCCSA Regional Safety Advisor (RSA). *"But even a minor fall from six feet can cause injuries and fatalities on construction sites."*

A U.S. study conducted by the Center for Construction Research and Training reveals that 16.4% of falls reported by survey participants occurred at a height of fewer than six feet – and 5.3% of those falls resulted in fatalities.

Robertson notes that no two falls are the same. A worker falling on a flat patch of ground will likely sustain less serious injuries than someone landing on a length of vertical rebar.

"Nobody gets to choose where they fall," he says. *"Wearing the correct fall protection system at all times can prevent you from striking the ground, or any objects that you would otherwise meet on your way down."*

- WorkSafeBC reports that, in 2023, fall-related incidents made up 14.1% of total claims, with strains and fractures noted as the most prevalent injuries. Over the past five years, WorkSafeBC accepted 22,044 claims for falls — 5,703 of these were for serious injuries and 88 were fatal injuries. In addition, WorkSafeBC imposed 105 administrative penalties totalling more than $1.12 million in 2024 to employers for lack of fall protection.

Robertson says that questions about fall protection and fall safety number among the top contractor concerns shared with the BCCSA's team of RSAs.

"We explain that the most effective way to protect workers from falls is to eliminate the hazard altogether," Robertson says. *"Also, educate them to recognize fall hazards, train them to use fall protection systems and provide them with correct and up-to-date fall protection equipment. Gravity is strong, but education can be a more powerful force."*

Looking for advice or assistance regarding fall protection and fall protection systems? A team of ***Regional Safety Advisors*** *is available to help at no cost.*

For more BCCSA resources on working at heights, please click ***here****.*