

Weekly Safety Tip

FATAL FALLS

A review the [OSHA stats regarding fatalities](#) readily highlights trends on how workers are being hurt and killed. In fact in the latest report, five of the first seven incidents listed, show workers who died from some sort of fall. It is important to remember here that non-work related injuries and fatalities often mirror the OSHA statistics.

Without knowing anything else about the incidents below, take a few minutes to think about and discuss ways these fatalities might have been prevented. Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)? Barricades? Training? Safe Plan of Action (SPA) forms completed? Hazard awareness? Ladder use? Fall protection equipment? Other?

- Employee died after falling 30 feet off a scissor lift.
- Employee died after falling 50 feet out of a bucket lift while trimming trees.
- Employee died after falling from a residential roof.
- Employee died after falling through a skylight.
- Employee died after a fall while installing gutters and window trim.



Ladders. Always inspect the ladder before each use and be sure you are using the right ladder for the job. Never lean a step ladder, stand on the top two steps, or straddle the top. Extension ladders should reach three feet above the point of support and you should not stand on the top three rungs. Set up a straight or extension ladder so the base is one foot out for every four feet in height. Maintain a three point contact and face the ladder while climbing.

Scaffolds. All scaffolds should be erected and inspected each day by a competent person. Scaffolds over 10 feet high must have hand rails installed or personal fall protection equipment must be used.

Aerial Lifts. Vehicle mounted, boom supported aerial platforms, such as cherry pickers or bucket trucks fall into this category. The main cause for fatalities and injuries are falls, electrocutions, and collapsing or the tipping over of the equipment. This equipment should only be operated by someone who has been properly trained and proper fall protection PPE should be worn.