SKILLSIGNAL™
Construction Safety & Compliance

TOOLBOX TALK

Slips, Trips, and Falls by the Numbers: The One Injury Nobody Plans For

TOPIC NO.	DURATION	AUDIENCE
FP-01	**10 to 15 min**	**All Crew**

OSHA REFERENCE 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M · 29 CFR 1910 Subpart D · BLS CFOI 2024

PROJECT / JOBSITE	DATE	PRESENTED BY

01 THE HOOK

START HERE

Raise your hand if you, a coworker, or somebody in your family has ever been hurt in a slip, trip, or fall. Keep it up. Look around. That is more hands than any other kind of injury would get, and every one of those people woke up that morning thinking it was a normal day. Falls are the most ordinary way to get killed in this trade. This talk kicks off a series on slips, trips, and falls. Today is the numbers. The next nine talks are what we do about them.

02 WHAT THE NUMBERS ACTUALLY SAY

These are not scare-tactic numbers. They come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics census of every work death in the country, and from OSHA's own citation data. Here is the picture for the most recent year reported.

WORKERS KILLED BY FALLS, SLIPS, TRIPS

844

IN ONE YEAR

BLS CFOI, 2024

MORE THAN TWO A DAY, EVERY DAY

Out of 5,070 total work deaths in 2024, **844** came from falls, slips, and trips. That is one in six. **666 of those were falls to a lower level**: off a roof, a ladder, a scaffold, a floor opening. The rest were same-level falls and slips and trips that never became a fall at all but still killed somebody.

CONSTRUCTION SHARE OF FATAL FALLS

47%

OF ALL FATAL FALLS

BLS, 2022

OUR TRADE OWNS THE PROBLEM

Construction employs about 1 in 20 American workers but accounts for **nearly half** of all fatal falls, slips, and trips. In 2022, falls killed 412 construction workers, about **38 percent of every construction death that year**, and 397 of those 412 were falls to a lower level. Among construction and extraction workers in 2024, 370 of 1,032 deaths were falls, slips, or trips.

03 FOUR FACTS WORTH REPEATING

FACT 1

FALLS ARE THE #1 OSHA CITATION. FIFTEEN YEARS RUNNING.

Fall Protection, General Requirements (**29 CFR 1926.501**) was OSHA's most cited standard in fiscal year 2025 with **6,992 violations**. It has held the top spot every year since 2011. Ladders (1926.1053) came in third with 2,842, and Fall Protection Training (1926.503) was seventh. Three of the top ten citations are about falling.

FACT 2

IT IS NOT JUST THE ROOF.

Construction workers take days off for falls on the same level at a rate of **10.3 per 10,000 workers**, and for slips and trips without a fall at 5.7 per 10,000. Nationally, falls, slips, and trips cause roughly **480,000 days-away-from-work injuries a year**, the third leading cause of lost-time injury. A twisted knee from stepping off a curb wrong is a real injury with a real recovery.

FACT 3

THE FALLS THAT KILL ARE SHORT.

In BLS data, **about two-thirds of fatal falls to a lower level** with a known height were from **20 feet or less**. Single-story roofs, scaffolds, the top of a step ladder, a truck bed. The height that feels too low to bother clipping in is exactly the height that fills the fatality report.

FACT 4

IT COSTS MORE THAN MOST INJURIES.

Fall injuries are consistently among the most expensive workers' comp claims because they produce fractures, head injuries, and spinal injuries that take months, not days. A broken wrist from a slip can mean twelve weeks of no grip strength.

04 WHERE THIS SERIES GOES

Every talk in this program answers one practical question. We go from the ground up: the stuff that trips you on flat ground first, then ladders and guardrails, then the harness and everything it connects to.

TALKS 2 TO 6: STAYING ON YOUR FEET	TALKS 7 TO 10: WHEN YOU'RE TIED OFF
TOPIC **Preventing slips, preventing trips, footwear, portable ladders, and what guardrails can and cannot do**	TOPIC **Harness fit, lanyards, anchor points, and calculating total fall clearance**
THE STANDARD 1926.25 (housekeeping), 1926.56 (lighting), 1926.1053 (ladders), 1926.502(b) (guardrails)	THE STANDARD 1926.502(d) (personal fall arrest systems), 1926.503 (training)
WHO NEEDS IT Everyone on site, every day, from the gate to the gang box	WHO NEEDS IT Anyone working at or above 6 feet in construction who is not behind a guardrail

05 WHY IT MATTERS

[JOBSITE]

FOR THE CREW

A fall shuts the site down. OSHA shows up, the schedule stops, and every crew member watches a coworker leave in an ambulance. Knowing the numbers makes the five-second habits (clean walkways, tied-off ladders, clipped-in lanyards) feel worth the five seconds.

[INDIVIDUAL]

FOR YOU

You are not the exception. The guys in those statistics were experienced, strong, and busy. The difference between you and them is the habits you run on a boring Tuesday when nobody is watching.

[HOME]

FOR LIFE OFF-SITE

Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths for Americans over 65. The same attention to footwear, lighting, and ladders at home keeps your parents out of the hospital too.

06 TODAY'S DRILL

TODAY'S DRILL **COUNT THE EXPOSURES**

Before you start work, walk from the gate to your work area and count every spot where you could slip, trip, or fall: a cord across the path, a muddy ramp, a ladder that is not tied off, an open edge with no rail. Write the number down. Tell your foreman the number and the worst one on the list. We will compare counts at the end of this series.

07 CREW DISCUSSION

Take 2 minutes. Pick one.

1. Who here has been hurt in a fall, at work or at home? What happened in the ten seconds before it?

2. Of the exposures you see on this site today, which one would show up in a fatality report if it went wrong? Why has nobody fixed it yet?

3. Falls have been the top OSHA citation for fifteen years. Why do you think that number never moves, even though everyone knows the rule?

08 ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

All attendees confirm they participated in this Toolbox Talk and understand the content covered.

NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

_____ Date: _____

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