

Fall Hazards: Standing Walls

Highlights of Fall Protection Requirements



While framing and erecting walls, workers can be exposed to serious fall hazards, particularly if the framed walls have unprotected openings and are erected on multi-story buildings or structures. This fact sheet covers highlights from 296-880, WAC.



Workers are exposed to falls while raising a wall without using fall protection. Workers will also be exposed to falls through the unguarded opening once the wall is anchored in place.

Are the walls an acceptable barrier that provides fall protection for those workers behind the walls?

No. The walls do not act as a barrier and do not provide recognized fall protection equivalent to fall protection systems in 296-880, WAC.

A wall may not be considered a barrier until after it has been permanently anchored into place and openings are properly guarded.

Is fall protection required when standing walls?

Yes. Employers must ensure that workers who are or may be exposed to serious fall hazards of 4 feet or more when framing, raising, and setting walls by hand are protected from falls in accordance with WAC 296-880-20005.

Before wall sections are raised and set into place, further reduce employees' risk of exposure to fall hazards by installing:

- Sheathing or guardrails, that meet the requirements in WAC 296-880-20005(1)(a), across openings, and
- Covers over holes that meet the requirements in WAC 296-880-20005(3)(a).



Guardrails are required across openings that have sill heights less than 39 inches.



What can employers do to protect employees?

Before starting the job, identify and evaluate all fall hazards to ensure appropriate fall protection systems are selected and installed at heights of 4 feet or more. You are required to fill out a site specific fall protection work plan for those fall hazards of 10 feet or more.

Plan

- Communicate fall protection expectations prior to the job starting.
- Ensure the person(s) in charge of the job site (foreman, supervisor or lead worker) enforces your fall protection work plan.

Avoid crushing injuries

- When pre-planning, be sure to consider, implement and communicate steps that will prevent the wall from falling back onto the workers.

Assemble walls

- Consider using pre-fabricated wall panels to reduce the amount of time workers are exposed to fall hazards while working at heights.
- Build walls onsite using the installed floor of the structure as the working surface.

In either case, employers must ensure that fall protection for those working on a walking or working surface are protected from falls of 4 feet or more.

Fall Arrest

Stopped after the fall with a 6 ft. maximum free-fall distance.

There are 3 types of fall arrest systems:

- Personal fall arrest system requirements (PFAS), WAC 296-880-40020. Understand and calculate the fall distance before selecting and implementing PFA systems!
- Safety nets, WAC 296-880-40055
- Catch platforms, WAC 296-880-40060

Fall Restraint

Restrained from falling.

Restraint systems for framing activities may include one or more of the following:

- Personal Fall Restraint, WAC 296-880-40025
- Guardrail Systems, WAC 296-880-40005
- Covers, WAC 296-880-40015

For more information, visit www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyTopics and search for Fall Restraint and Fall Arrest.

We can help

Employers: We offer workplace safety and health consultations, risk management assessments, training and technical assistance at no cost. For more information, go to www.Lni.wa.gov/DOSHConsultation.

Employee/employee representatives: You may file a formal complaint when you believe a safety or health hazard exists in your workplace. Go to www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyComplaints for information in English and Spanish.

This information is available in alternate formats on request.

For more information

Contact Consultation Services:

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| ■ Northwest Washington | 425-290-1369 |
| ■ King County | 206-835-1065 |
| ■ Pierce County/Olympic Peninsula | 253-596-3917 |
| ■ Southwest Washington | 360-575-6951 |
| ■ Central Washington | 509-886-6570 |
| ■ Eastern Washington | 509-886-6570 |

On the web: www.Lni.wa.gov/SafetyTopics.

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