



# COMPLIANCE BULLETIN

## OSHA FINAL RULE ON SLIP, TRIP AND FALL PROTECTION

### HIGHLIGHTS

- The final rule contains safety standards to address slip, trip and fall hazards.
- The final rule changes PPE standards for required personal fall protection systems.
- Employers can select the fall protection system that works best for them.

### IMPORTANT DATES

**November 18, 2016**

Final rule publication date.

**January 17, 2017**

Final rule effective date. Later deadlines apply for compliance with specified standards.

### OVERVIEW

On **Nov. 18, 2016**, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) published a [final rule](#) to update standards regarding walking-working surfaces and personal protective equipment (PPE). The final rule becomes effective on **Jan. 17, 2017**; however, OSHA is allowing additional time for employers to comply with certain standards, including:

- Employee training on fall and equipment hazards;
- Certification of anchorages;
- Equipping existing fixed ladders with cages, wells, safety systems or personal fall arrest systems; and
- Equipping new fixed ladders with safety systems or personal fall arrest systems.

The final rule increases consistency between the general and construction industry fall protection standards and allows employers to choose the system that best works for them.

### ACTION STEPS

Employers should become familiar with the final rule and evaluate whether they need to make any changes to their policies, procedures, training programs and equipment to comply with the final rule by the compliance deadlines specified in the table on Page 3.

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# COMPLIANCE BULLETIN

## General Requirements

The final rule applies to all general industry workplaces and covers all **walking-working surfaces**, unless an exemption applies. The final rule updates existing general industry requirements for walking-working surfaces. A walking-working surface is “any horizontal or vertical surface on or through which an employee walks, works or gains access to a workplace location.”

The new standards for walking-working surfaces address:

- ✓ **Surface conditions and housekeeping:** Employers must maintain walking-working surfaces in clean and dry conditions (to the extent that this is feasible). These surfaces must also be kept clear of hazards posed by sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow and ice.
- ✓ **Application of loads:** Employers must ensure that each walking-working surface can support the maximum intended load for it.
- ✓ **Access to and egress:** Employers must provide, and ensure that each employee uses, a safe means of access and egress to and from walking-working surfaces.
- ✓ **Inspection, maintenance and repair:** Employers must inspect walking-working surfaces regularly, as necessary, to ensure they are in good maintenance and condition. If any hazard is identified during inspection, the hazard must be addressed before an employee uses the walking-working surface again. If immediate repair is not possible, the surface must be guarded to prevent employees from using it until it is repaired. A qualified person must perform or supervise the repair of any hazard that compromises the structural integrity of the surface.

Additional standards apply to specific walking-working surfaces, including ladders, step bolts and manhole steps, stairways, dockboards, and scaffold and rope descent systems.

## Fall Protection Systems

The final rule also indicates that employers must ensure that workers have fall and falling object protection in certain areas and during certain operations or activities. Unless stated otherwise, this protection must comply with the criteria and work practices set forth in [29 CFR § 1910.29](#).

For fall protection, the rule establishes the types of fall protection systems that employers must use to protect their employees, but allows employers to select (among the prescribed systems) the system that works best for them. The final rule also specifies the criteria these systems must meet to be in compliance with OSHA regulations.

The list of fall protection systems includes:

- ✓ Guardrails
- ✓ Safety nets
- ✓ Personal fall protection
- ✓ Personal fall arrest
- ✓ Travel restraint
- ✓ Ladder safety
- ✓ Positioning
- ✓ Handrails
- ✓ Use of designated areas

## Falling Object Protection Systems

The final rule also requires employers to protect their employees from being struck by falling objects. Some of these requirements include the mandatory use of head protection gear that meets the requirements of [29 CFR part 1910, subpart I](#).

# COMPLIANCE BULLETIN

In addition, employers must protect their employees by doing at least one of the following:

- ✓ Erect toeboards, screens or guardrail systems to prevent objects from falling to a lower level;
- ✓ Erect canopy structures and keep potential falling objects far enough from an edge, hole or opening to prevent these objects from falling to a lower level; or
- ✓ Barricade the area into which objects could fall, prohibit workers from entering the barricaded area and keep objects far enough from the edge or opening to prevent them from falling to the lower level.

## Training Requirements

The final rule adds training requirements for employers. When designing these training requirements, OSHA relied heavily on the training requirements that currently exist for the fall protection standard in the construction industry.

While the training employers provide to their employees under the new rule is not required to be site-specific, it does need to address the hazards to which employee may be exposed at their workplace.

The training requirement under the final rule becomes effective on **May 17, 2017**. To comply with training requirements, employers must ensure that the training is provided by a qualified person.

At a minimum, the training must include:

- ✓ The nature of the fall hazards in the work area and how to recognize them;
- ✓ The procedures employees must follow to minimize those hazards;
- ✓ The correct procedures for installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining and disassembling the personal fall protection systems that the employees use; and
- ✓ The correct use of personal fall protection systems and equipment, including, but not limited to, proper hookup, anchoring and tie-off techniques, and the methods of equipment inspection and storage, as specified by the manufacturer.

## Compliance Schedule

Although the final rule becomes effective on Jan. 17, 2017, OSHA is extending compliance deadlines for the following requirements, as shown in the table below:

| Standard   | Compliance Date | Standard   | Compliance Date |
|--|-----------------|--|-----------------|
| Employee training  | May 17, 2017    | Equipping new fixed ladders with safety systems or personal fall arrest systems        | Nov. 19, 2018   |
| Certification of anchorages  | Nov. 20, 2017   | Equipping all fixed ladders with a ladder safety system or personal fall arrest system | Nov. 18, 2036   |
| Equipping existing fixed ladders with cages, wells, safety systems or personal fall arrest systems | Nov. 19, 2018   |  |                 |