

*Editor's Note: Safety Group Program Monthly Newsletter Article — Sept. 2019  
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## **Fall Fatalities: Simple Steps to Safer Steps**

Not surprisingly, most worker deaths come in the construction industry. But did you know falls are the leading cause of fatalities in the construction trades? In fiscal year 2017, falls accounted for 39 percent of deaths in construction.<sup>1</sup> Sadly, this problem isn't new. For more than three decades, falls have caused nearly half of construction worker fatalities.<sup>2</sup>

But the construction industry isn't alone. Manufacturing, retail, transportation and warehousing have suffered the losses from falls. In alarming numbers, even white-collar workers in professional and business services have fallen to their deaths.

### **Preventing fall fatalities**

Fortunately, there are many resources to help your employees work safely at all heights (see below). Beginning today, you can remind your workers to take these simple steps to safer steps:

#### On ladders

- Choose the right ladder for the job.
- Inspect the ladder. If defective, remove it from service.
- Maintain three points of contact (e.g., two feet, one hand).
- Secure the ladder.
- Always face the ladder.

#### On scaffolds

- Use a fully planked scaffold.
- Ensure proper access to scaffold.
- Plumb and level.
- Complete with all guardrails: top, middle and toe board.
- Ensure stable footing.
- Inspect before use and after any incident that could affect its integrity.

On roofs

- Wear a harness and stay connected.
- Ensure your harness fits.
- Use guardrails or lifelines.
- Inspect fall protection equipment before use. Replace if the system has deployed.
- Guard or cover holes, openings and skylights.

### **Pinnacol and other resources**

The [Knowledge Center](#) on Pinnacol's website provides a training roster to document your employee training in slip, trip and falls. Check out Pinnacol's construction inspection checklist; facilities checklist; downloadable worksite posters; Pinnacol Pointers on slip, trip and falls as well as ladder safety; and several one-page Safety Talks on the subject. In partnership with J.J. Keller, a leader in safety and compliance training, Pinnacol provides [online and video classes](#) in slip, trip and falls.

[OSHA](#) also provides a webpage of extensive training resources. And the [National Safety Council](#) provides customized training solutions that address slip, trip and falls.

OSHA's [website](#) offers an extensive array of educational materials for employers and employees on fall prevention. Read about the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation \(FACE\) program](#). The organization has many fall prevention publications, as well. Additionally, statistics and fall prevention guidelines are available from the National Safety Council.

For further information and support, we invite you and your team to contact Pinnacol's Safety On Call at [safetyoncall@pinnacol.com](mailto:safetyoncall@pinnacol.com) or 303.361.4700 or 888.501.4752.

Footnotes:

1. OSHA, Commonly Used Statistics, <https://www.osha.gov/oshstats/commonstats.html>, 2019.
2. "42 Percent of Construction Worker Deaths Involve Falls, New Database Shows," Safety+Health magazine, <https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/16646-percent-of-construction-worker-deaths-involve-falls-new-database-shows>, Jan. 30, 2018.

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