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Legal Standards & References

Occupational Health & Safety Act requires employers to:

- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.
- Make workers aware of the hazards in the workplace and provide information and instruction to protect the health and safety of workers.
- Employers, supervisors and workers must follow the requirements set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and O. Reg. 213/91 Construction Projects.
- Non-construction-based working at heights will comply with Ontario Regulation 851 (Industrial Establishments) section 85

Definitions

Anchorage - A secure connecting point capable of safely withstanding the impact forces (weight capacity) applied, as applicable, by a fall arrest, fall restricting or fall prevention system, or anchorage subsystem.

Bottoming out - A situation when a falling worker hits the ground or other object before the fall is arrested. Refer to Appendix B for an illustration on Fall Arrest Hazards.

Competent person - A person who is qualified because of knowledge, training and experience to organize the work and its performance; is familiar with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the regulations that apply to the work; and has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace.

Construction - Includes erection, alteration, repair, dismantling, demolition, structural maintenance, painting, land clearing, earth moving, grading, excavating, trenching, digging, boring, drilling, blasting, or concreting, the installation of any machinery or plant, and any work or undertaking in connection with a project but does not include any work or undertaking underground in a mine.

CPO - Chief Prevention Officer of the Ministry of Labor, Training, Skills and Development.

Fall arrest system - An assembly of components joined together so that when the assembly is connected to a fixed support, it is capable of arresting a worker's fall.

Fall restricting system - A type of fall arrest system that has been designed to limit a worker's fall to a specified distance.

Fall prevention - A system that prevents or eliminates the hazard of a fall.

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Fall protection - Equipment used to mitigate or limit the effects of a fall from a height. Fall protection does not stop the fall; it is equipment used by employees to limit the distance and effects of a fall when working in an area where a potential fall exists.

Fixed support - A permanent or temporary structure or a component of such a structure that can withstand all loads and forces the structure or component is intended to support or resist and is sufficient to protect a worker's health and safety, and includes equipment or devices that are securely fastened to the structure or component.

Full body harness - A device that can arrest an accidental vertical or near vertical fall of a worker and which can guide and distribute the impact forces of the fall by means of leg and shoulder strap supports and an upper dorsal suspension assembly which, after the arrest, will not by itself permit the release or further lowering of the worker.

Guardrail system - An assembly of components joined together to provide a barrier to prevent a worker from falling from the edge of a surface.

Project - A construction project, whether public or private, including, the construction of a building, bridge, structure, industrial establishment, mining plant, shaft, tunnel, caisson, trench, excavation, highway, railway, street, runway, parking lot, cofferdam, conduit, sewer, watermain, service connection, telegraph, telephone or electrical cable, pipe line, duct or well, or any combination thereof, the moving of a building or structure, and Any work or undertaking, or any lands or appurtenances used in connection with construction.

Safety factor - The ratio of the failure load to the specified load or rated load. Refer to Appendix C for a Safety Factor illustration.

Travel restraint system - An assembly of components capable of restricting a worker's movement on a work surface and preventing the worker from reaching a location from which he or she could fall.

Policy Statement

This policy is intended to provide direction for all Town of Fort Erie Departments to protect employees who work at heights. The hierarchy of controls shall be considered and applied to hazards associated with working at heights.

Purpose

This Policy & Procedure applies to all Town of Fort Erie employees who may be working from heights and exposed to a fall:

- More than 3 meters (10 feet).

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- More than 1.2 meters (4 feet) if work area is used as a path for a wheelbarrow or similar equipment.
- Into operating machinery.
- Into water or another liquid.
- Into or onto a hazardous substance or object, or
- Through an opening on a work surface.

A guardrail system must be used if an employee may be exposed to a fall of 2.4 meters (8 feet) or more and have access to the perimeter or an open side of any of the work surfaces listed below:

- A floor, including the floor of a mezzanine or balcony.
- The surface of a bridge.
- A roof while formwork is in place, or
- A scaffold platform, work platform, runway or ramp.
- A barrier at least 1.1 meters high shall be provided at the top of every wall of an excavation that is not sloped, if the excavation is more than 2.4 meters deep and there is the risk of a person falling in.

Scope

Due to the significant potential hazards which confined spaces may present to Town employees and contractors, it is the Town's responsibility as an employer to develop, implement and maintain a written Working at Heights Policy & Procedure. The intent of this program is to ensure compliance with the general requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act of Ontario, and the specific requirements of O. Reg. 213/91 Construction Projects and Ontario Regulation 851 Industrial Establishments.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Management

All areas where there is a potential injury due to working at heights are identified. Procedures and processes to support implementation of this Policy & Procedure are developed. Procedures and processes are regularly reviewed after relevant workplace changes and after all falls or near falls.

- Fall arrest rescue plans are developed for each job and posted in a spot that is accessible to all workers.
- Education and training are provided to ensure workers and supervisors understand and properly fulfill their role in fall protection and prevention. Equipment inspection and record keeping processes are in place.

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- Ensure that a process is in place for certification by a professional engineer for equipment and systems, when required, and that corrective actions are taken to address identified deficiencies.

Managers/supervisors will ensure that:

- Work requiring the use of fall arrest, fall restricting, travel restraint equipment must not be performed alone Hazard assessments are conducted to identify situations where workers will work at heights.
- Workers who work at heights and meet the criteria outlined by the Ministry of Labour receive CPO approved Working at Heights training before working at heights.
- Workers are informed about fall hazards and how to work safely at heights
- Workers are trained on the appropriate fall arrest, fall restricting and/or fall prevention systems and its inspection and use Workers are trained and comply with this policy and relevant procedures Equipment used for working at heights are:
 - Inspected by a qualified person before use on each work-shift.
 - Kept free from substances and conditions that could contribute to its deterioration.
 - Maintained in good working order.
 - Permanent anchor points, as part of buildings, are inspected by a Professional Engineer annually and records are maintained.
 - Temporary anchor points are inspected by a competent person prior to use.
 - Any equipment that has arrested the fall of a worker is removed from service and is not returned to service until it has been inspected and recertified as safe for use by the manufacturer or its authorized agent, or by a Professional Engineer.
 - Equipment that is removed from service must be destroyed prior to disposal.

Workers shall:

Comply with regulations, this policy and the departmental fall protection procedures and work plan when working at heights:

- Attend all mandatory training.
- Participate in fall protection planning where relevant and when requested.
- Alert the supervisor about any unknown or unexpected fall hazards before beginning or continuing any work.
- Wear and use all equipment, clothing or devices in accordance with information and instruction provided.
- Inspect equipment before use and verify the annual inspection date is within the last twelve months.

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- Protect the protective equipment from damage and keep equipment free from substances and conditions that could contribute to its deterioration. (e.g. protect the equipment from sharp edges, heat, flame or corrosive substances)
- Report to management any broken, defective or missing protective equipment or building structures.
- Maintain equipment in good working order.
- Maintain one hundred percent fall protection connection at all times when they are at risk of a fall.
- Ensure that any equipment that has arrested the fall of a worker is removed from service and that the occurrence is reported immediately to the supervisor.

Coordinator, Workplace Safety will:

- Aid departments in identifying hazards and developing site-specific programs and work plans, upon request.
- Assist departments in accessing Ministry of Labour approved Working at Heights training, when such training is required.

Rescue Plans

Managers or Supervisors will develop Fall arrest rescue plans for each job and posted in a spot that is accessible to all workers Utilizing Appendix A. All staff involved will:

- Review the site-specific rescue plan.
- Be trained in the rescue equipment & procedure.

Inspections

- Workers certified in Working at Heights will inspect their fall protection equipment prior to use. If there are any signs of damage then the equipment must be removed from service and destroyed.
- Inspected by the certified Coordinator, Workplace Safety Utilizing Appendix B annually with a written record to validate approval for continued use. Fall Protection equipment that does not pass the annual inspection must be removed from service and destroyed.

Program Evaluation

The Coordinator, Workplace Safety will review and update various components of the Program on a regular basis. The audit may consist of, but is not limited to, a review of:

- Program elements against regulatory requirements and best practices.
- All documentation above.
- Site visits to confirm that workplace practices comply with program requirements.

Training

The Ministry of Labour has outlined the training requirements for workers on construction projects who use any of the following methods of fall protection:

- Travel restraint systems.

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- Fall restricting systems.
- Fall arrest systems.

These workers are required to complete a working at heights training program that has been approved by the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO) and delivered by a CPO approved training provider before working at heights. Additional training considerations must be given when scaffolding, ladders and elevated work platforms are utilized.

Evaluation

- The Departments policy is reviewed and updated annually in consultation with the MJHSC.

Acknowledge Success/Make Improvements

- Employment Services and/or the MJHSC may make recommendations regarding the provision and maintenance of a corporate health and safety policy. Improvements are incorporated as part of the annual review. Successes are acknowledged at the annual Safety and Attendance Banquet.

THIS GUIDELINE TAKES EFFECT IMMEDIATELY AND REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL REPLACED BY A NEW GUIDELINE OR SUPERSEDED BY LEGISLATION/REGULATION

Departmental Manager

Worker Co-Chair, JHSC

Reviewed (Date):	By (Name and Initial):

***This document can be made available in an accessible format upon request.**

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TOFE Fall Protection Rescue Plan

Job Task

Work at Height Dates	From:	To:
What is task(s) to be performed:		
Names of employees who are involved in the work at height		
	Printed Name	Signature
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Communications

What communication systems will be used between the suspended worker and supervisor / rescue team?	
	Direct voice communication
	Whistle
	Mobile Phone
	Two-way Radios / Headsets

Emergency Contact

911 - Fire, EMS	List Departmental Contacts:

Written Rescue Plan

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Rescue plan drawings if required

Person Responsible for Working at Height Rescue Plan	
Printed Name	Signature

