

WAC 296-155-24609 Fall protection required at four feet or more.

(1) You must ensure that the appropriate fall protection system is provided, installed, and implemented according to the requirements in this part when employees are exposed to fall hazards of 4 feet or more to the ground or lower level when on a walking/working surface.

(2) **Guarding of walking/working surfaces with unprotected sides and edges.** You must guard every open sided walking/working surface or platform 4 feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level by one of the following fall protection systems.

(a) A standard guardrail system, or the equivalent, as specified in WAC 296-155-24615(2), on all open sides, except where there is entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder. The railing must be provided with a standard toe board wherever, beneath the open sides, persons can pass, there is moving machinery, or there is equipment with which falling materials could create a hazard.

(i) When employees are using stilts, the height of the top rail or equivalent member of the standard guardrail system must be increased (or additional railings may be added) an amount equal to the height of the stilts while maintaining the strength specifications of the guardrail system.

(ii) Where employees are working on platforms above the protection of the guardrail system, the employer must either increase the height of the guardrail system as specified in (a)(i) of this subsection, or select and implement another fall protection system as specified in (b), (c), (d), (e), or (f) of this subsection.

(iii) When guardrails must be temporarily removed to perform a specific task, the area must be constantly attended by a monitor until the guardrail is replaced. The only duty the monitor must perform is to warn persons entering the area of the fall hazard.

(b) A fall restraint system;

(c) A personal fall arrest system;

(d) A safety net system;

(e) A catch platform; and

(f) A warning line.

(3) **Guarding of ramps, runways, and inclined walkways.**

(a) Ramps, runways, and inclined walkways that are four feet or more above the ground or lower level must be equipped with a standard guardrail system or the equivalent, as specified in WAC 296-155-24615(2), along each open side. Wherever tools, machine parts, or materials are likely to be used on the runway, a toe board must also be installed on each open side to protect persons working or passing below.

(b) Runways used exclusively for special purposes may have the railing on one side omitted where operating conditions necessitate such omission, provided the falling hazard is minimized by using a runway not less than 18 inches wide.

Note: See WAC 296-155-24619(1) for other specific criteria for ramps, runways, and inclined walkways.

(4) **Guarding of floor openings.**

(a) You must guard floor openings by one of the following fall restraint systems.

(i) A standard guardrail system, or the equivalent, as specified in WAC 296-155-24615(2), on all open sides, except where there is entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder. The railing must be provided with a standard toe board wherever, beneath the open sides, persons can pass, or there is moving machinery, or there is equipment with which falling materials could create a hazard.

(ii) A cover, as specified in WAC 296-155-24615(3).

(iii) A warning line system erected at least 15 feet from all unprotected sides or edges of the floor opening and meets the requirements of WAC 296-155-24615(4).

(iv) If it becomes necessary to remove the cover, the guardrail system, or the warning line system, then an employee must remain at the opening until the cover, guardrail system, or warning line system is replaced. The only duty the employee must perform is to prevent exposure to the fall hazard by warning persons entering the area of the fall hazard.

(b) You must guard ladderway floor openings or platforms by a standard guardrail system with standard toe boards on all exposed sides, except at entrance to opening, with the passage through the railing either provided with a swinging gate or so offset that a person cannot walk directly into the opening.

(c) You must guard hatchways and chute floor openings by one of the following:

(i) Hinged covers of standard strength and construction and a standard guardrail system with only one exposed side. When the opening is not in use, the cover must be closed or the exposed side must be guarded at both top and intermediate positions by removable standard guardrail systems.

(ii) A removable standard guardrail system with toe board on not more than two sides of the opening and fixed standard guardrail system with toe boards on all other exposed sides. The removable railing must be kept in place when the opening is not in use and must be hinged or otherwise mounted so as to be conveniently replaceable.

(d) Wherever there is a danger of falling through an unprotected skylight opening, or the skylight has been installed and is not capable of sustaining the weight of a 200 pound person with a safety factor of 4, you must provide standard guardrails on all exposed sides in accordance with WAC 296-155-24615(2) or the skylight must be covered in accordance with WAC 296-155-24615(3). Personal fall arrest equipment may be used as an equivalent means of fall protection when worn by all employees exposed to the fall hazard.

(e) You must guard pits and trap door floor openings by floor opening covers of standard strength and construction. While the cover is not in place, the pit or trap openings must be protected on all exposed sides by removable standard guardrail system.

(f) You must guard manhole floor openings by standard covers which need not be hinged in place. While the cover is not in place, the manhole opening must be protected by standard guardrail system.

(5) Guarding of wall openings.

(a) You must guard wall openings, from which there is a fall hazard of 4 feet or more, and the bottom of the opening is less than 39 inches above the working surface, as follows:

(i) When the height and placement of the opening in relation to the working surface is such that either a standard rail or intermediate rail will effectively reduce the danger of falling, one or both must be provided;

(ii) The bottom of a wall opening, which is less than 4 inches above the working surface, regardless of width, must be protected by a standard toe board or an enclosing screen either of solid construction or as specified in WAC 296-155-24615 (2)(c).

(b) An extension platform, outside a wall opening, onto which materials can be hoisted for handling must have standard guardrails on

all exposed sides or equivalent. One side of an extension platform may have removable railings in order to facilitate handling materials.

(c) When a chute is attached to an opening, the provisions of subsection (5)(c) of this section apply, except that a toe board is not required.

(6) **Fall protection during form and rebar work.** When exposed to a fall height of 4 feet or more, employees placing or tying reinforcing steel on a vertical face are required to be protected by personal fall arrest systems, safety net systems, or positioning device systems.

(7) **Fall protection on steep pitched and low pitched roofs.**

(a) **Steep pitched roofs.** Regardless of the work activity, you must ensure that employees exposed to fall hazards of 4 feet or more while working on a roof with a pitch greater than 4 in 12 use one of the following:

(i) Fall restraint system. Safety monitors and warning line systems are prohibited on steep pitched roofs;

(ii) Fall arrest system; or

(iii) Positioning device system.

(b) **Low pitched roofs.** You must ensure that employees exposed to fall hazards of 4 feet or more while engaged in work, other than roofing work or leading edge work, on low pitched roofs use one of the following:

(i) Fall restraint system;

(ii) Fall arrest system;

(iii) Positioning device system;

(iv) Safety monitor and warning line system; or

(v) Safety watch system.

(8) **Hazardous slopes.** Employees exposed to falls of 4 feet or more while working on a hazardous slope must use personal fall restraint systems or positioning device systems.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060. WSR 16-09-085, § 296-155-24609, filed 4/19/16, effective 5/20/16. Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060 and 29 C.F.R. 1926, Subpart M, Fall Protection. WSR 13-04-073, § 296-155-24609, filed 2/4/13, effective 4/1/13.]