

(Effective October 1, 2020)

WAC 296-880-40055 Safety net system requirements. Safety net systems and their use must conform with the following provisions:

(1) Safety nets must be installed as close as practicable under the surface on which employees are working, but in no case more than thirty feet (9.1 m) below such level unless specifically approved in writing by the manufacturer. The potential fall area to the net must be unobstructed.

(2) Safety nets must extend outward from the outermost projection of the work surface as follows:

Table 2

Vertical distance from working levels to horizontal plane of net	Minimum required horizontal distance of outer edge of net from the edge of the working surface
Up to 5 feet	8 feet
More than 5 feet up to 10 feet	10 feet
More than 10 feet	13 feet

(3) The employer must install safety nets with sufficient clearance under them to prevent contact with the surface or structures below when subjected to an impact force equal to the drop test specified in subsection (5) of this section.

(4) Safety nets and their installations must be capable of absorbing an impact force equal to that produced by the drop test.

(a) Except as provided in subsection (6) of this section, safety nets and safety net installations must be drop-tested at the job site after initial installation and before being used as a fall protection system, whenever relocated, after major repair, and at six-month intervals if left in one place. The drop-test must consist of a four hundred pound (180 kg) bag of sand, thirty plus or minus two inches (76 plus or minus 5 cm) in diameter dropped into the net from the highest walking/working surface at which employees are exposed to fall hazards, but not from less than forty-two inches (1.1 m) above that level.

(b) When the employer can demonstrate that it is unreasonable to perform the drop-test required by (a) of this subsection, the employer (or a designated competent person) must certify that the net and net installation is in compliance with subsections (2) and (3) of this section by preparing a certification record prior to the net being used as a fall protection system. The certification record must include an identification of the net and net installation for which the certification record is being prepared; the date that it was determined that the identified net and net installation were in compliance with subsection (5) of this section and the signature of the person making the determination and certification. The most recent certification record for each net and net installation must be available at the job site for inspection.

(5) The employer must inspect safety nets at a minimum of once a week for wear, damage, and other deterioration. Defective components must be removed from service. Safety nets must also be inspected after any occurrence which could affect the integrity of the safety net system.

(6) The employer must remove materials, scrap pieces, equipment, and tools which have fallen into the safety net as soon as possible from the net and at least before the next work shift.

(7) The maximum size of each safety net mesh opening must not exceed thirty-six square inches (230 cm²) nor be longer than six inches (15 cm) on any side, and the opening, measured center-to-center of mesh ropes or webbing, must not be longer than six inches (15 cm). All mesh crossings must be secured to prevent enlargement of the mesh opening.

(8) Each safety net (or section of it) must have a border rope or webbing with a minimum breaking strength of five thousand pounds (22.2 kN).

(9) Connections between safety net panels must be as strong as integral net components and must be spaced not more than six inches (15 cm) apart.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 49.17.010, 49.17.040, 49.17.050, 49.17.060, and chapter 49.17 RCW. WSR 20-12-091, § 296-880-40055, filed 6/2/20, effective 10/1/20.]