Weekly Toolbox Talk
Avoiding Falls from Heights

Falls from heights are the single most common cause of injuries and death in the construction industry. Most falls are preventable, providing common sense is used.

A person may fall when:

- There is a sudden acceleration or deceleration
- Openings or holes are not protected or identified
- Hand grip is lost
- Open edges are not protected
- Ladders are used incorrectly
- They slip or trip
- They are struck by a moving or falling object
- They take risks without fall-arrest systems

There are three steps to consider if working at heights:

- Identify the likely hazard of falling 6 feet or more. If this is likely, then a means to prevent a fall must be put in place.
- Assess the risk of injury to a person should a fall of less than 6 feet occur. If injury is likely, a safeguard should be in place to prevent it.
- Control the risks by having in place systems which will prevent the fall.

To prevent injuries from falls:

- Guard every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk by use of a railing and toe board or a floor hole cover
- Provide a guardrail and toe board around every open-sided platform, floor, or runway that is 4 feet or higher off the ground or next level.
- Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment, employers must provide guardrails and toe boards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- Other means of fall protection that may be required on certain jobs include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railings, and handrails.