

NATIONAL SAFETY STAND-DOWN

Falls are the leading cause of fatalities in the construction industry, accounting for more than 30% of fatal injuries. Understanding the risks associated with working at heights and taking steps to manage those risks can help prevent workers and employers from a serious injury or fatality.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge that is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level to be protected from falling by use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems.

This outline will guide you through your safety stand-down as it pertains to the post frame industry.

Prior to Beginning, It Is Important to Perform a Risk Assessment for Each Job Task and Follow NIOSH's Hierarchy of Controls.

- Elimination – if a hazard can be physically removed from the work environment, it must be.
- Substitution – can the hazard be replaced?
- Engineering controls – isolate people from the hazard (e.g., shields, guards, or barricades).
- Administrative controls – change the way people work around the hazard.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) – protect the worker with protective equipment (e.g., safety glasses, hard hat, or fall protection equipment).

Identify Hazardous Situations in the Post Frame Industry

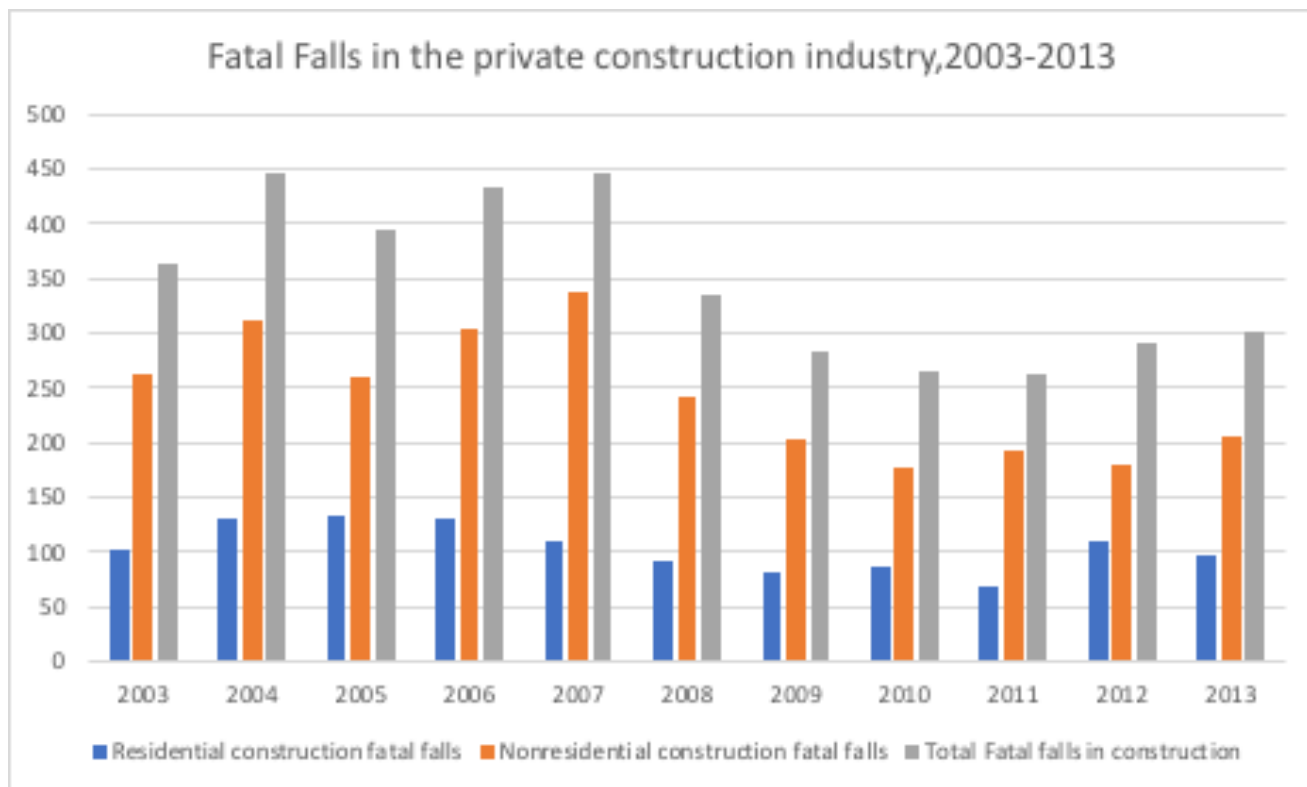
- Wall construction/climbing walls
- Installing trusses and purlins
- Falls from scaffolding
- Falls from roofs
- Falls through fragile roof surfaces
- Falls from ladders
- Falls from mobile platforms (e.g., scissor-lifts or aerial platforms)

Types of Fall Protection

- **Personal fall arrest system (PFAS)** are made up of three essential components: an anchor point, a full-body harness, and a connecting lifeline. In the event of a fall, a PFAS arrests a worker's fall and limits the free fall distance to 6' or less.
- **Fall restraint devices** are made up of the same components as a PFAS except they limit the travel of a worker to prevent the fall from occurring.
- **Guardrail systems** have top rails that must be between 39 and 45 inches above the walking/working level. Mid-rails must be midway between the top edge of the guardrail system and the walking/working level. Intermediate members (such as balusters) between posts must be no more than 19 inches apart. Guardrail systems must be capable of withstanding at least 200 pounds of force applied within 2 inches of the top edge, in any direction and at any point along the edge, and without causing the top edge of the guardrail to deflect downward to a height less than 39 inches above the walking/working level. Mid-rails and other intermediate members must be capable of withstanding at least 150 pounds of force applied in any direction at any point along the mid-rail or other member.

Inspections and Safety Behaviors

- Every piece of your fall protection system must be inspected prior to every use.
- Walking/working surfaces on which employees are to work must have the strength and structural integrity to support employees safely. Employees shall be allowed to work on those surfaces only when the surfaces have the requisite strength and structural integrity.
- Ladders are inspected for defects prior to every use, and workers maintain 3 points of contact at all times while ascending and descending.
- Ladders are positioned to avoid displacing the feet of the ladder.
- All scaffolds are built and maintained according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Scaffolds must be inspected daily.



Fatal falls to a lower level in private-sector construction, by source and height of fall, 2011–14

Height	Roofs	Ladders	Scaffolds	Other source
Unspecified height	39	75	23	34
More than 30 feet	67	10	39	95
26 to 30 feet	53	11	12	23
21 to 25 feet	63	24	18	24
16 to 20 feet	81	43	25	30
11 to 15 feet	81	45	26	42
6 to 10 feet	21	50	23	40
Less than 6 feet	(1)	23	6	24

Footnotes:
 (1) No data were reported or data do not meet publication standards.

National Safety Stand-Down certificates of participation and additional training are available on OSHA’s website at www.osha.gov/stopfallsstanddown/

Thank you to Dave Underwood, Safety Manager at FBi Buildings, for drafting this guideline.