

Working in attics, particularly low attics, can be difficult. While walking through or working in attics, workers must be protected from fall hazards. Depending on the condition of the attic, this may be achieved by:

- Eliminating the fall hazard (example: installing flooring)
- Using a passive fall protection system (example: guardrails)
- Using a fall restraint or fall arrest system



Workers can be injured if they fall through the ceiling to a lower level.

- Before work begins in the attic, the walking/working surfaces must be evaluated to determine if they have the strength and structural integrity to support workers safely.
- Using a piece of plywood or planking to stand on could improve footing.
- If the area around the plywood or planking is open, and the work area is 6 feet or more above a lower level, workers should be using fall protection.

**OSHA Standard 1926.501(b)(1)** *Each employee on a walking/working surface with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling.*

Planning for the use of fall protection equipment can help protect workers from falls while working in attics.

- Before beginning the job, identify fall protection needs.
- Survey the attic to determine what fall protection systems can be used.
- Plan ahead and have those systems in place before workers report to the job.

Not all fall protection methods are suitable in all work situations and attic locations.

- Scaffolds or ladders can be erected below the attic work area.
- Safety nets may be used underneath truss chords to prevent falls to a lower level.
- A Personal Fall Arrest System (PFAS) can be used with an anchorage connector installed on a structurally sound component within the attic.
- A fall restraint system can be used in place of a personal fall arrest system.

## Discussion

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***What hazards found in attics could cause falls or injuries?***

***For the kind of attic work you normally do, what are the best fall protection methods?***