

Fall protection trigger heights for general industry

OAR 437, Division 2/D, Division 2/F, Division 2/I, Division 2/N



Trigger heights for special industries (Division 2, Subdivision R) are not covered in this fact sheet.

Oregon OSHA's general industry standards require employers to identify the potential for falls in the workplace and establish appropriate fall protection when they identify fall hazards.

Four feet above the ground or a lower level is widely understood among general industry employers as the "trigger height" that requires you to take action to protect your employees from fall hazards.

Did you know that some trigger heights in general industry differ from four feet? Working above or adjacent to dangerous equipment requires action to protect employees from falls onto that equipment, regardless of height, while scaffolds have trigger heights above four feet.

Selecting, installing, maintaining, and using fall protection can be challenging. Browse through any safety supply website and you will see a wide variety of fall protection systems; however, not all systems provide equivalent levels of worker protection. One fall protection system may not be appropriate for every workplace situation. The rules referenced in the table on Page 2 will help you select appropriate fall protection systems when your employees work at heights that require you to take action to protect them.

Understanding Oregon OSHA's fall protection trigger heights and the types of fall protection allowed in general industry will help you protect your employees. Most of the walking-working surface rules provide more than one fall protection option to protect employees from fall hazards. The table on Page 2 identifies trigger heights for a variety of general industry situations your employees may encounter.

Fall protection trigger heights for general industry

Walking surface / working surface / situation	Trigger height				Regulation
	Any height	Four Feet	Ten Feet	Other	
Aerial lifts – vehicle-mounted elevating and rotating work platforms	A				1910.67(c)(2)(v)
Assembly pits – when 1910.28(b)(8)(i)-(iii) is satisfied			X		1910.28(b)(8)
Billboards – outdoor advertising				>24'	1910.28(b)(10)(i)
Boom supported elevating work platforms (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	A				437-003-0073(2)

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Walking surface / working surface / situation	Trigger height				Regulation
	Any height	Four Feet	Ten Feet	Other	
Chutes – attached to a hole	A				1910.28(b)(3)(v)
Chutes – attached to an opening		X			1910.28(b)(7)
Dangerous equipment	A				1910.28(b)(6)
Dockboards		X			1910.28(b)(4)(i)
Dockboards – when using motorized material handling equipment			B		1910.28(b)(4)(ii)
Fixed ladders – extend more than 24 feet above a lower level				>24'	1910.28(b)(9)
Hatchways – hole created by the hatchway	A				1910.28(b)(3)(v)
Hoisting areas		X			1910.28(b)(2)
Hole – tripping or stepping into or through hole less than 4 feet deep	A				1910.28(b)(3)(ii)
Holes – when the 1910.21(b) definition of “hole” is satisfied		X			1910.28(b)(3)
Ladderways – hole created by the ladderway	A				1910.28(b)(3)(iv)
Low-slope roofs		X			1910.28(b)(13)
Motor vehicle surfaces			B		437-002-0134(5)(a)(A)
Openings – when the 1910.21(b) definition of “opening” is satisfied		X			1910.28(b)(7)
Powered industrial truck (forklift) – personnel platforms	A				437-002-0227(4)(a)
Repair pits – when 1910.28(b)(8)(i)-(iii) is satisfied			X		1910.28(b)(8)
Rolling stock surfaces			B		437-002-0134(5)(a)(A)
Rope access systems		X			437-002-2027(6)(e)(D)
Rope descent systems		X			1910.28(b)(12)(ii)
Runways and similar walkways		X			1910.28(b)(5)(i)
Scaffolds – supported			B		1926.451(g)(1)
Scaffolds – suspended			B		1926.451(g)(1)
Service pits – when 1910.28(b)(8)(i)-(iii) is satisfied			X		1910.28(b)(8)
Skylights – when unprotected		X			1910.28(b)(3)(i)
Slaughtering facility platforms		X			1910.28(b)(14)
Stairway – ships stairs & alternating tread type	A				1910.28(b)(11)(iii)
Stairway landings		X			1910.28(b)(11)(i)
Stairways – each flight of stairs having at least 3 treads and 4 risers				X	1910.28(b)(11)(ii)
Stairways – hole created by the stairway	A				1910.28(b)(3)(iii)
Unprotected sides and edges		X			1910.28(b)(1)
Walking-working surface not otherwise addressed (WWSNOA)		X			1910.28(b)(15)

KEY: A = Provide protection for employees when exposed to the hazard or situation at any height.
 B = Fall protection system required at heights greater than the listed height.
 X = Fall protection system required at heights that are equal to or greater than the listed height.



The trigger-height chart above uses many of the terms defined in the Walking-Working Surface rules in 1910.21(b). To assist you, 11 are provided below:

- **Dangerous equipment** means equipment, such as vats, tanks, electrical equipment, machinery, equipment or machinery with protruding parts, or other similar units, that, because of their function or form, may harm an employee who falls into or onto the equipment.
- **Dockboard** means a portable or fixed device that spans a gap or compensates for a difference in elevation between a loading platform and a transport vehicle. Dockboards include bridge plates, dock plates, and dock levelers.
- **Fall hazard** means any condition on a walking-working surface that exposes an employee to a risk of harm from a fall on the same level or to a lower level.
- **Fall protection** means any equipment, device, or system that prevents an employee from falling from an elevation or mitigates the effect of such a fall.
- **Hole** means a gap or open space in a floor, roof, horizontal walking-working surface, or similar surface that is at least 2 inches (5 cm) in its least dimension.
- **Lower level** means a surface or area to which an employee could fall. Such surfaces or areas include ground levels, floors, roofs, ramps, runways, excavations, pits, tanks, materials, water, equipment, and similar surfaces and structures, or portions thereof.
- **Opening** means a gap or open space in a wall, partition, vertical walking-working surface, or similar surface that is at least 30 inches (76 cm) high and at least 18 inches (46 cm) wide, through which an employee can fall to a lower level.
- **Ramp** means an inclined walking-working surface used to access another level.
- **Stairway** (stairs) means risers and treads that connect one level with another, and includes any landings and platforms in between those levels. Stairways include standard, spiral, alternating tread-type, and ship stairs.
- **Unprotected sides and edges** mean any side or edge of a walking-working surface (except at entrances and other points of access) where there is no wall, guardrail system, or stair rail system to protect an employee from falling to a lower level.
- **Walking-working surface** means any horizontal or vertical surface on or through which an employee walks, works, or gains access to a work area or workplace location.

