

General information about OSHA and this regulation

The OSH Act of 1970 created OSHA. Since then, OSHA has created regulations to protect workers from various hazards, including falls. OSHA has separate regulations for different industry sectors. Of interest in this tech brief are those for General Industry (CFR 1910) and Construction (CFR 1926).

What is new and what it should mean to you

The OSHA regulations for fall protection in general industry in CFR 1910 have previously been limited to either eliminating any fall hazards by keeping the work tasks at ground-level, or by placing a barrier between the worker and the hazard, such as guardrails. In contrast, the rules in CFR 1926 for construction have included personal fall arrest systems (PFAS) as an additional option for protecting workers at height since 1994. OSHA has also written directives and letters of interpretation allowing PFAS in limited cases in general industry. However, the updates to CFR 1910 published November 17, 2016 have now aligned the two regulations, allowing PFAS for worker protection at heights.

The following new requirements will also go into effect as noted.

Scaffolds – [1910.27\(a\)](#): The new rule replaces the outdated general industry scaffold requirements with a direct reference to those in CFR 1926 for construction.

Fixed Ladders – [1910.28\(b\)\(9\)](#): The new rule phases out a 1993 exception for the outdoor advertising industry that used to allow “qualified climbers” to forego fall protection. [1910.28\(b\)\(10\)](#) Additionally, fall protection must be installed/used on all fixed ladders over 24ft according to the timetable below.

- Existing installations (before November 19, 2018) must have a PFAS, ladder safety system, cage, or well.
- New installations (after November 19, 2018) must have a PFAS or ladder safety system. Cages and wells will no longer be acceptable.
- Fixed ladder, cage, or well replacements or any sections thereof must have PFAS or a ladder safety system installed at least on the replaced section.
- Final deadline – after November 18, 2036 all fixed ladders must be equipped with a PFAS or ladder safety system.

Work On Low Sloped Roofs (4 in 12 pitch or less) – [1910.28\(b\)\(13\)](#): The rule adds provisions for work on low sloped roofs depending on the work frequency, duration, and distance from the edge of the roof.

- Less than 6 feet from the edge - Must use: guardrails, safety net, travel restraint, or PFAS
- Between 6-15 ft from the edge - May also use a “[designated area](#)” if work is infrequent and temporary
- More than 15 ft from the edge - Must protect with an option above unless work is infrequent or temporary

Training – 1910.30: The rule adds the requirement that before any employee is exposed to a fall hazard, the employer must provide training. This requirement must be met before May 17, 2017 and must cover at least the following topics:

- Nature of fall hazards in the work area and how to recognize them
- Procedures to be followed to minimize hazards
- Procedures for installing, inspecting, operating, maintaining, and disassembling the PFAS used
- Correct use of PFAS including but not limited to: proper hook-up, anchoring, and tie-off techniques, and methods of equipment inspection and storage, as specified by the manufacturer

Performance, Care, and Use of Personal Fall Protection Systems – Subpart I – 1910.140; 1910.140(c)(8)

- PFAS have been added to Subpart I – PPE
- All snaphooks and carabiners will now need to have 3600 lbs gate strength
- Otherwise very similar to 1926.502

OSHA Links

About the Rule: <https://www.osha.gov/walking-working-surfaces/>

Fact Sheet: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3903.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.osha.gov/walking-working-surfaces/faq.html>

Regulatory Text: <https://www.osha.gov/walking-working-surfaces/RegTextWWSFinalRule.pdf>