Fall Protection Program Audit

Program Audit Checklist

Facility Name:	
Auditor:	
Date:	
Audit Period:	

Regulatory References

The following regulations and guidance documents are applicable to this program audit. Click any link to view the full text.

Regulation / Guidance Document
29 CFR 1926 Subpart M — Fall Protection (Construction)
29 CFR 1910 Subpart D — Walking-Working Surfaces (General Industry)
29 CFR 1926.502 — Fall Protection Systems Criteria and Practices
29 CFR 1926.503 — Fall Protection Training Requirements
29 CFR 1910.30 — Fall Protection Training (General Industry)
OSHA Fall Protection Overview
ANSI/ASSE Z359 Fall Protection Code Series

Instructions: Review each audit item and record findings in the Status and Notes columns. Use C (Compliant), NC (Non-Compliant), NA (Not Applicable), or NR (Needs Review) for the status. Document specific findings, evidence reviewed, and any corrective actions needed in the Notes column.

Hazard Assessment and Program Documentation

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Fall hazard assessment	A comprehensive fall hazard assessment has been conducted identifying all locations and tasks where employees are exposed to fall hazards. Assessment covers walking/working surfaces, leading edges, holes and openings, roofs, scaffolds, ladders, aerial lifts, and any elevated work areas. Assessment is documented and updated when conditions change. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.501, 1910.28 [best practice]*		
Written fall protection plan	A written fall protection plan or program exists per 1926.502(k) (construction) or as best practice (general industry). The plan identifies fall hazards, specifies fall protection methods for each hazard, designates competent and qualified persons, establishes equipment requirements, describes rescue procedures, and addresses training requirements. The plan is site-specific and updated for changing conditions. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(k), ANSI Z359.2*		
Competent person designation	A competent person is designated per 1926.500(b) who is capable of identifying existing		

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	and predictable fall hazards, identifying unsanitary or dangerous conditions, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures. The competent person's qualifications, training, and authority are documented. A qualified person is designated for system design where required. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.500(b) definition*		
Fall protection method selection	Appropriate fall protection methods are selected based on the work activity, hazard, and feasibility. The hierarchy of controls is applied: elimination/engineering controls first (guardrails, covers), then administrative controls (warning lines, controlled access zones), then personal fall protection (harnesses, SRDs) as a last resort. Method selection is documented and justified when conventional methods are infeasible. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502, 1910.28*		

Personal Fall Protection Equipment

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Equipment selection and specifications	Personal fall arrest systems meet OSHA and ANSI Z359 requirements. Full body harnesses are used for fall arrest (body belts prohibited for fall arrest). Lanyards, connectors, and anchorages are rated for the required loads (5,000 lbs per person or designed by a qualified person with a 2:1 safety factor). Self-retracting devices (SRDs) are appropriate for the application and meet ANSI Z359.14. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(d), ANSI Z359.1, Z359.11*		
Anchorage points	Anchorage points are capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds per employee attached, or are designed, installed, and used under the supervision of a qualified person as part of a complete PFAS maintaining a safety factor of at least two per 1926.502(d)(15). Anchorages are identified, documented, and marked. Anchorage locations provide adequate clearance to prevent contact with lower levels. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15)*		
Pre-use equipment inspection	All personal fall protection equipment is inspected before each use by the user per ANSI Z359.2. Inspection covers harness webbing (cuts, fraying, chemical damage, UV degradation), hardware (corrosion, deformation, cracks), stitching integrity, labels/markings legibility, lanyard/SRL condition, and connector operation. Defective equipment is immediately removed from service and tagged. » *Ref: ANSI Z359.2 [best practice]*		
Formal equipment inspection	A competent person conducts formal documented inspections of all fall protection equipment at least annually per ANSI Z359.2. Inspection records include equipment identification (serial number), inspector name, date, findings, and disposition. Equipment involved in a fall arrest event is immediately		

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
	removed from service, inspected by a competent person, and either destroyed or returned to the manufacturer for evaluation. » Ref: ANSI Z359.2 [best practice]		

Guardrails, Covers, and Passive Systems

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Guardrail systems	Guardrail systems meet height requirements (42 inches +/- 3 inches for construction per 1926.502(b), 42 inches +/- 3 inches for general industry per 1910.29(b)). Top rails withstand 200 pounds of force. Mid-rails are at half the height of the top rail. Guardrails are smooth-surfaced to prevent injuries. Openings do not allow passage of a 19-inch sphere. Toeboards are provided where tools/materials could fall on workers below. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(b), 1910.29(b)		
Hole covers and floor openings	Floor holes and openings are covered with materials capable of supporting twice the maximum intended load per 1926.502(i). Covers are secured against displacement and marked with 'HOLE' or 'COVER.' General industry requires covers or guardrails for holes/openings 4 inches or more in their least dimension per 1910.28(b)(3). Covers are inspected regularly. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(i), 1910.28(b)(3)		
Safety net systems	If safety nets are used, they are installed as close as practicable under the walking/working surface but no more than 30 feet below per 1926.502(c). Nets extend outward based on the vertical distance from the work surface. Drop tests are performed after installation, after repair, and at 6-month intervals. Debris is removed regularly. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(c)		

Training and Competency

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Employee fall protection training	Each employee exposed to fall hazards is trained by a competent person before exposure per 1926.503 (construction) and 1910.30 (general industry). Training covers fall hazard recognition, procedures for minimizing hazards, correct procedures for equipment use (erecting, maintaining, disassembling, inspecting guardrails and personal fall protection), and each employee's role in the fall protection plan. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.503, 1910.30		
Training certification	Training is certified in writing per 1926.503(b). Certification includes the name of the employee, date(s) of training, and signature of the trainer or competent person. Certification records are maintained and available for inspection. Retraining is provided when deficiencies are observed, when workplace changes render prior		

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
	training inadequate, or when fall protection systems change. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.503(b)		
Competent person training	Designated competent persons have received training appropriate to their responsibilities including fall hazard identification, fall protection system selection and design, equipment inspection procedures, rescue planning, and OSHA regulatory requirements. Competent person qualifications are documented. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.500(b) [best practice]		
Rescue training	Employees who may be involved in fall rescue operations are trained on rescue procedures and equipment use. Rescue training includes self-rescue techniques, assisted rescue methods, equipment deployment, and suspension trauma awareness. Training is practiced through drills using actual rescue equipment. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20), ANSI Z359.2		

Rescue Planning and Emergency Response

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Written rescue plan	A written rescue plan exists for each location where personal fall arrest systems are used. The plan addresses how workers will be rescued promptly after a fall arrest event. Rescue methods may include self-rescue, assisted rescue by co-workers, rescue by on-site rescue team, or rescue by off-site emergency services. The plan accounts for site-specific conditions and response times. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20), ANSI Z359.2		
Suspension trauma prevention	The rescue plan addresses suspension trauma (also called orthostatic intolerance or harness hang syndrome), which can cause serious injury or death within minutes if a worker is suspended motionless in a harness after a fall. The plan includes provisions for prompt rescue (within 6 minutes if possible), suspension relief straps on harnesses, and post-rescue medical protocols. Workers are trained to recognize suspension trauma symptoms. » Ref: OSHA Safety & Health Information Bulletin, ANSI Z359.2		
Rescue equipment availability	Rescue equipment is readily available at locations where fall arrest systems are used. Equipment may include rescue davits, retrieval systems, descent devices, ladder access, aerial lifts, or other appropriate means. Equipment is inspected, maintained, and readily deployable. Rescue equipment locations are identified in the rescue plan. » Ref: 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(20) [best practice]		

Program Review and Improvement

Audit Item	Expected Finding	Status	Notes / Evidence
Incident investigation	All fall-related incidents, including near-misses and fall arrest activations, are investigated to determine root cause and prevent recurrence. Investigation covers adequacy of fall protection measures, equipment performance, training effectiveness, and any program deficiencies. Findings drive corrective actions and program improvements. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1910.119(m) [best practice]*		
Annual program review	The fall protection program is reviewed at least annually by a competent or qualified person. Review evaluates hazard assessment currency, protection method adequacy, equipment condition, training compliance, rescue plan effectiveness, and incident/near-miss trends. Review findings are documented and drive program updates. » *Ref: ANSI Z359.2 [best practice]*		
Regulatory compliance verification	The program is reviewed for compliance with current OSHA standards, ANSI Z359 consensus standards, and any state-specific fall protection requirements. State Plan states may have additional or more stringent requirements. Changes in regulations are identified and incorporated into the program. » *Ref: 29 CFR 1926 Subpart M, 1910 Subpart D*		

Corrective Actions Summary

#	Finding	Corrective Action	Responsible	Due Date
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

Audit Sign-Off

Auditor Name:

Auditor Signature:

Date Completed:

Reviewed By:

Review Date:

Status Key: C = Compliant | NC = Non-Compliant | NA = Not Applicable | NR = Needs Review