**Toolbox Topics**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Trainer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Company: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Working at Heights --- Safe Work Practices**

**Most employment fields come with their own set of risks, but some are not for the faint of heart. Workers who** **perform tasks at great heights can face a number of potential dangers that others avoid by keeping their feet on the** **ground. There are a number of steps that must take in addition to using adequate fall protection equipment to ensure** **the safety of yourself and your co-workers when working at great heights**.

***Risk Assessment***

**The best way to avoid injury when working at heights is to remove as many risks as possible.**

**Check the conditions surrounding your work area. For outdoor areas, check the weather. High winds, rain and** **thunderstorms can create extremely hazardous situations for workers who are off of the ground, increasing the** **chance of falling, slippery surfaces or injury. Make sure your work area has proper overhead clearance from trees,** **power lines and other obstructions that could create damage or injury.** **For indoor work areas, check the floor to make sure that it is level and stable. The area that will support your ladder** **or other height equipment should not be slippery or slanted, or else you risk your support falling out from under** **you.** **Gather all of your equipment to your work area before you ascend. If you have to constantly climb up and down to** **your work area, you increase the risk of injury.**

***Surrounding Areas***

**Work areas that include workers elevated above the floor should be clearly marked and segregated to prevent** **people from walking or driving underneath. Falling debris or equipment can seriously injure anyone who may be** **below.** **If possible, have a co -worker or assistant on the ground below you to help you get down and to continue to assess** **risks and potential dangers. This worker should wear proper safety equipment, such as a hard hat, that will protect** **her from any falling objects.**

***Equipment Checks***

**Inspect all of your equipment before starting the job to ensure that everything is safe and in working order.** **Ladders, lifts and scaffolds must be properly positioned and installed. Ladders must be properly extended and** **locked into place. Mechanical equipment should be properly connected and prepared, and users should review** **proper operating procedures before beginning the work.** **Certain types of equipment, such as mechanical lifts, require safety equipment for proper use. All safety harnesses** **and lines must be secured and checked before work begins, in case of emergency. Workers should don all goggles,** **helmets, gloves and other safety equipment before ascending.** **Finally, all tools and equipment that the worker needs should ascend with him. If using a ladder, attach tools to the** **belt or pouch that you wear as you climb. Taking your hands off of the ladder to grab equipment coming up from** **below can cause you to unbalance and fall.**

**“Very often a change of self is needed more than a change of scene.” *Arthur Christopher Benson***