
News Release

U.S. Department of Labor

Release Number: 10-1753-NAT

Dec. 22, 2010

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US Labor Department's OSHA acts to protect residential roofing workers
Agency rescinds Clinton-era directive and gives workers more safeguards against falls

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration today announced a new directive withdrawing a former one that allowed residential builders to bypass fall protection requirements. The directive being replaced, issued in 1995, initially was intended as a temporary policy and was the result of concerns about the feasibility of fall protection in residential building construction. However, there continues to be a high number of fall-related deaths in construction, and industry experts now feel that feasibility is no longer an issue or concern.

"Fatalities from falls are the number one cause of workplace deaths in construction. We cannot tolerate workers getting killed in residential construction when effective means are readily available to prevent those deaths," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Dr. David Michaels. "Almost every week, we see a worker killed from falling off a residential roof. We can stop these fatalities, and we must."

The National Association of Home Builders recommended rescinding the 1995 directive, as did OSHA's labor-management Advisory Committee for Construction Safety and Health; the AFL-CIO; and the Occupational Safety and Health State Plan Association, which represents the 27 states and territories that run their own occupational safety and health programs.

According to data from the department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, an average of 40 workers are killed each year as a result of falls from residential roofs. One-third of those deaths represent Latino workers, who often lack sufficient access to safety information and protections. Latino workers comprise more than one-third of all construction employees.

OSHA's action today rescinds the Interim Fall Protection Compliance Guidelines for Residential Construction, Standard 03-00-001. Prior to the issuance of this new directive, Standard 03-00-001 allowed employers engaged in certain residential construction activities to use specified alternative methods of fall protection rather than the conventional fall protection required by the residential construction fall protection standard. With the issuance of today's new directive, all residential construction employers must comply with 29 Code of Federal Regulations 1926.501(b)(13). Where residential builders find that traditional fall protection is not feasible in residential environments, 29 CFR 1926.501(b)(13) still allows for alternative means of providing protection.

Construction and roofing companies will have up to six months to comply with the new directive. OSHA has developed training and compliance assistance materials for small employers and will host a webinar for parties interested in learning more about complying with the standard. To view the directive and for more information, visit http://www.osha.gov/doc/residential_fall_protection.html.

Read today's *Federal Register* notice at <http://s.dol.gov/C9>.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.

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