

OSHA Issues New Regulations to Keep Construction Workers Safe From Falls

The process of building a house or garage includes a lot of installation or construction above ground level. Whether installing roof trusses or putting on the sub-floor of a second story, there is always the possibility that a construction worker could fall. And, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), falls are the leading cause of work-related fatalities for residential construction workers.

Because of the risk of fatal falls, OSHA recently issued new requirements that residential construction workers working six feet or higher must be provided fall protection by their employer. The new regulation gives residential construction companies three months – until September 15, 2011 – to come into full compliance with requirements.

During this time, if a construction company is in full compliance with the old regulations, but not yet in compliance with the new requirements, OSHA states that no fine will be issued; however, a hazard alert letter will be given to the employer explaining methods on how to come into full compliance with the new regulations.

According to an OSHA guidance document, employers may use the following fall prevention devices/methods to come in compliance with the new regulation:

- Guard rails
- Safety netting
- Personal fall arrest systems, including harnesses, deceleration devices, lanyards and anchor systems
- Personal fall restraint systems, including harness or

lanyard systems that are not long enough to allow the construction worker to reach the edge

To help residential construction employers come into compliance, OSHA is offering a numerous resources on its website. Workers injured on the job may be able to file for workers' compensation while they recover from their injuries.