

Fall Protection in Washington State

All Industries

Applicable Industry	Equipment Activity or Surface	Fall Protection Trigger Height	Applicable WISHA Standard	Requirement	Applicable Notes
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ALL	Open-sided floors, walkways and platforms	Always	WAC 296-800-26010-1	Guard open-sided floors, walkways and platforms above or adjacent to dangerous equipment, pickling or galvanizing tanks, degreasing units, and other similar hazards, regardless of height with a railing and toe-board.	
	Open-sided floors and platforms	4 feet		Guard open-sided floors and platforms 4 feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level by a railing. The entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder does not need a railing.	
	Scaffolds	10 feet	WAC 296-874-20052	Protect each employee on a scaffold more than 10 feet above a lower level, by providing personal fall arrest systems or guardrails.	A fall protection work plan is not required for persons working from a scaffold
	Elevating work platforms	Always	WAC 296-869-20045	Make sure all persons on the platform of boom-supported elevating work platforms wear a full body harness and lanyard fixed to manufacturer provided and approved attachment points.	Guardrails are the primary means of fall protection for manually propelled elevating work platforms.
		Always, if required	WAC 296-869-60035	All persons on the platform are wearing fall protection devices and other safety gear if required.	

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	General industry Powered platforms	Always	Chapter 296-24, WAC Part J-3	~~~~~	Requirements apply to all general industry operations using powered platforms
ALL	PITS	Always	WAC 296-863-20025	Ensure order pickers are equipped with standard guardrails along open sides OR use a safety harness and lanyard that are connected to a tie off point that has been approved by the PIT manufacturer.	
			WAC 296-863-40060	Make sure personal fall arrest equipment meets the requirements of WAC 296-24-88050, Appendix C. Make sure work platforms have standard guardrails and toe boards on all sides.	
	Confined spaces	Always	WAC 296-809-60004	When entrance covers are removed, promptly guard the opening with a railing, temporary cover, or other temporary barrier to prevent accidental falls through the opening and protect entrants from objects falling into the space.	

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			WAC 296-809-50016	Ensure each entrant uses a full-body harness with a retrieval line attached to the harness at the center of the employee's back, near shoulder level; or above the employee's head; or at another point which presents a profile small enough for the successful removal of the employee. Then attach the retrieval line to a mechanical device or fixed point outside the space, so rescue can begin as soon as necessary.	Non-entry rescue
		5 feet & mechanical equipment		If the vertical space is more than 5 feet deep, a mechanical device must be available for retrieval.	
Agriculture	Working above or adjacent to dangerous equipment	Always	WAC 296-307-25015-1	Regardless of height, all open sided floors, walkways, platforms, or runways above or adjacent to dangerous equipment, pickling or galvanizing tanks, degreasing units, or similar hazardous equipment, must be guarded with a standard railing and toe-board.	
	Open sided floor, platforms or surfaces above another level	4 feet	WAC 296-307-25015-3	Every open sided floor, platform or surface four feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level shall be guarded by a standard railing (or the equivalent) according to WAC 296-307-25027 on all open sides, except where there is entrance to a ramp, stairway, or fixed ladder.	

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Construction	Working above or adjacent to dangerous equipment	Always	WAC 296-155-24607-1	Regardless of height, open sided floors, walkways, platforms, or runways above or adjacent to dangerous equipment, such as dip tanks and material handling equipment, and similar hazards shall be guarded with a standard guardrail systems.	
	Floor holes and floor openings		WAC 296-155-24607-2	Floor holes and floor openings into which persons can accidentally walk shall be guarded by either a standard railing with standard toeboards on all exposed sides, or a cover of standard strength and construction that is marked and secure against displacement. While the cover is not in place, the opening or hole shall be protected by a standard railing.	Guardrail specifications are under WAC 296-155-24615-2. Cover specification are under WAC 296-155-24615-3
	Impalement hazards such as exposed rebar or wood stakes		WAC 296-155-24607-3	Regardless of height, employees shall be protected from falling into or onto impalement hazards; such as: reinforcing steel (rebar), or exposed steel or wood stakes used to set forms.	
	Form & rebar work	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-6	When exposed to a fall height of 4 feet or more, employees placing or tying reinforcing steel on a vertical face are required to be protected by personal fall arrest systems, safety net systems, positioning device systems.	

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Construction	Hatchways, & chutes	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-4-c	Hatchways and chute floor openings shall be guarded by a hinged cover of standard strength and construction and a standard guardrail system with only one exposed side. When the opening is not in use, the cover shall be closed or the exposed side shall be guarded at both top and intermediate positions by removable standard guardrail systems.	
	Hazardous slopes		WAC 296-155-24609-8	Employees exposed to falls of 4 feet or more while working on a hazardous slope shall use personal fall restraint systems or positioning device systems.	
	Ladderway floor openings or platforms		WAC 296-155-24609-4-b	Must be guarded by a standard guardrail system with standard toeboards along all exposed sides, except at entrance to an opening, with the passage through the railing either provided with a swing gate or so offset that a person cannot walk directly into the opening.	
	Low pitch roofs (4:12 or less)		WAC 296-155-24609-7-b	Employers shall ensure that employees exposed to fall hazards of 4 feet or more while engaged in work, other than roofing work or leading edge work, on low pitched roofs use a fall protection system.	
	Manholes		WAC 296-155-246009-4-f	Must be guarded by standard covers which need not be hinged in place. While the cover is not in place, the manhole opening shall be protected by a standard guardrail system.	

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Construction	Open-sided or walking or working surfaces	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-2	Every open-sided walking or working surface or platform 4 feet or more above adjacent floor or ground level shall be guarded by a fall protection system.	
	Pit and trap doors		WAC 296-155-24609-4-e	Pit and trap door openings shall be guarded by floor opening covers of standard strength and construction. While the cover is not in place, the pit or trap openings shall be protected on all exposed sides by removable standard guardrail system.	
	Ramps, runways, walkways including walkways that cross excavations		WAC 296-155-24609-3-a and b	Ramps, runways, and inclined walkways that are 4 feet or more above the ground or lower level shall be equipped with a standard guardrail system or the equivalent, as specified in WAC 296-155-24615-2, along each open side. Wherever tools, machine parts, or materials are likely to be used on a runway, a toeboard shall also be installed on each open side to protect persons working or passing below.	Runways used exclusively for special purposes may have the railing on one side omitted where operating conditions necessitate such omissions, provided the falling hazard is minimized by using a runway not less than 18-inches wide.

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Construction	Skylight openings	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-4-d	Wherever there is danger of falling through an unprotected skylight opening, or the skylight has been installed and is not capable of sustaining the weight of a two hundred pound person with a safety factor of four, standard guardrails shall be provided on all exposed sides in accordance with WAC 296-155-24615-2; or the skylight shall be covered in accordance with WAC 296-155-24615-3.	Personal fall arrest equipment may be used as an equivalent means of fall protection when worn by all employees exposed to the fall hazard.
	Steep pitch roofs (5:12 or greater)		WAC 296-155-24609-7-a	Regardless of the work activity, employers shall ensure that employees exposed to fall hazards of 4 feet or more while working on a roof with a pitch greater than 4:12 use fall arrest, restraint or positioning device systems.	Applies to all work activities. Safety monitors and warning line systems are prohibited on steep pitch roof.
Construction	Walking or working surfaces	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-1	The employer shall ensure that the appropriate fall protection system is provided, installed, and implemented according to the requirements in this part when employees are exposed to fall hazards of four feet or more to the ground or lower level when working on a walking or working surface.	

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Construction	Wall openings	4-feet	WAC 296-155-24609-5-a	<p>Wall openings, from which there is a fall hazard of 4 feet or more, and the bottom of the opening is less than 39-inches above the working surface, shall be guarded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the height and placement of the opening in relation to the working surface is such that either a standard rail or intermediate rail will effectively reduce the danger of falling, one or both shall be provided. - The bottom of a wall opening, which is less than 4-inches above the working surface, regardless of width, shall be protected by a standard toeboard or an enclosing screen either of solid construction or as specified in WAC 296-155-24615-2. 	
	Fall Protection Work Plan (FPWP)	10 feet	WAC 296-155-24611-2	The employer shall develop a written FPWP including each area of the work place where the employees are assigned and where fall hazards of 10 feet or more exist.	

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	Roofing work on low slopes (4:12 or less)		WAC 296-155-24611-1-a,	<p>The employer shall ensure that the appropriate fall protection system is provided, installed, and implemented according to the requirements in this part when employees are exposed to fall hazards of 10 feet or more to the ground or lower level while:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaged in roofing work on low pitched roof - Constructing a leading edge - Working on any surface that does not meet the definition of a walking or working surface not already covered in WAC 296-155-24609. - Engaged in excavation and trenching operations. 	
	Leading edge work *this is not the perimeter of a building	10 feet	WAC 296-155-24611-1-b	Same as above.	If you are working on a roof, floor/deck where leading edge work is taking place and a surface has been laid that is 45 inches or more in all directions AND you are not engaged in the leading edge work, then you are required to implement fall protection at 4 feet.

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	Surfaces that are not 45 inches or more in all directions (except ramps, runways, walkways and platforms)	10 feet	WAC 296-155-24611-1-c	See WAC 296-155-24611-1a-c	
	Excavation		WAC 296-155-24611-1-d		Fall protection required at 10 for employees in the affected area of an excavation who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aren't directly involved OR - Are on the protective system or any other structure in the excavation

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Electrical (HIGH VOLTAGE)	Working above the ground on poles, towers, or similar structures	4 feet	WAC 296-45-25510-12	Fall arrest equipment, work positioning equipment, or travel restricting equipment shall be used by employees working at elevated locations more than 4 feet above the ground on poles, towers, or similar structures if other fall protection has not been provided. Fall protection equipment is not required to be used by a qualified employee climbing or changing location on poles, towers, or similar structures, unless conditions, such as, but not limited to, ice, high winds, the design of the structure (for example, no provision for holding on with hands), or the presence of contaminants on the structure, could cause the employee to lose his or her grip or footing.	Requirements for fall protection associated with walking and working surfaces are contained in WAC 296-155-246; requirements for fall protection associated with aerial lifts are contained in chapter 296-869 WAC.
	Line clearance & tree trimming	Always	WAC 296-45-45530	Each employee shall be tied with a climbing rope and safety saddle when the employee is working above the ground in a tree, unless he or she is ascending into the tree.	
Fire Fighter	Training	10 feet	WAC 296-305-05501-4	When fire fighters are engaged in training above the ten-foot level where use of life lines or similar activities are to be undertaken, a safety net shall be erected or other approved secondary means of fall protections such as recommended in Chapter 296-155 WAC, Part C-1.	

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Grain Handling Facilities	Entry	Always	WAC 296-99-040-2-a	<p>The employer must ensure that during the entry and occupation of a storage structure the employee uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A body harness with a lifeline; or - A boatswain’s chair that meets the requirements of Chapter 296-874, WAC; whenever: <p>The employee is exposed to a fall hazard such as when entering from the top or above the level of the stored grain.</p>	
			WAC 296-99-040-2-b	<p>The employee is exposed to an engulfment hazard such as when entering at the level of the stored grain, or while walking or standing on the grain. The lifeline must be rigged so that its position and length will prevent the employee from sinking below waist level.</p>	
Logging	Working above or adjacent to water	Always	WAC 296-54-593-2-a-iii	<p>Employee’s working on, over or along water, where there is a danger of drowning, must be provided with and wear approved flotation devices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees wear approved safety belts with lifeline attached to prevent falling into the water. 	

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Longshore & Stevedoring		Always	WAC 296-56-60091-10	Bin top openings that present a hazard to employees shall be covered to prevent employees from falling into bins.	
	Maintenance work on cranes, spouts, or similar equipment	8 feet	WAC 296-56-60119	Employees doing maintenance work on cranes, spouts or similar types of equipment, eight feet or more above the ground or surface and not in an area that is protected by standard safeguards such as walkways with standard railings, or ladders with protective cages, shall wear a safety belt and lanyard which can be attached to the structure.	
	Gangway	Always	WAC 296-56-60122-1-f	When the lower end of a gangway overhangs the water between the ship and the dock in such a manner that there is danger of employees falling between the ship and the dock, a net or other suitable protection shall be rigged at the foot of the gangway in such a manner as to prevent employees from falling from the end of the gangway into the water or into the surface.	
	Floor & wall openings, and waterside edges	4 feet	WAC 296-56-60123-2-a	Guardrails shall be provided at locations where employees are exposed to falls of more than four feet from floor or wall openings or waterside edges, including bridges or gang-way like structures leading to pilings, vessel mooring or berthing installations.	

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Pulp & Paper	Beaters and pulpers	Always	WAC 296-79-030-1-c-i	A guardrail of standard height must be installed when the top edge of vessels or tubs is less than standard height guardrails above the floor or operator's platform. If necessary for the protection of the person feeding equipment, an intermediate guardrail or other suitable protection shall be installed.	
	Elevated ramps and runways	Always	WAC 296-79-110-2	Elevated ramps or runways used for the travel of wheeled equipment must have exposed sides guarded with a substantial bull rail or shear rail of sufficient height to prevent wheeled equipment from going over the rail.	
		4 feet		If elevated ramps or runways are used by pedestrians, standard guardrails must be installed on runways wherever the height exceeds 4 feet above the adjacent area except where used for loading or unloading purposes.	

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Saw mills & wood working	Floor & Wall Openings	4 feet	WAC 296-78-71003-1	All temporary or permanent floor and wall openings shall be protected as required by WAC 296-24-750 through 296-24-75011 and WAC 296-800-260.	
	Walkways	Always	WAC 296-78-71007-4	When employees are required to clear plug-ups in veneer trays or lumber sorting trays, adequate walkways with standard guardrails shall be provided for access to the trays whenever possible. When walkways are not provided, safety belts or harnesses with lanyards, tied off to substantial anchorages, shall be provided and used at all times.	
	Walkways and stairways	Always	WAC 296-78-71007-5-a	Walkways and stairways with standard hand rails shall be provided wherever space will permit, for oilers and other employees whose duties require them to go consistently to elevated and hazardous locations. - Where such passageways are over walkways or work areas, standard toeboards shall be provided.	
	Open vats and tanks	Always	WAC 296-78-71015-1	All open vats and tanks into which workers may fall shall be guarded with standard railings or screen guards in all cases where such guarding is possible with regard to practical operation.	

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Shipbuilding and ship repair	Manholes and other small openings	Always	WAC 296-304-05005-1	When employees are working in the vicinity of flush manholes and other small openings of comparable size in the deck and other working surfaces, such openings shall be suitably covered or guarded to a height of not less than 30 inches, except where the use of such guards is made impracticable by the work actually in progress.	
	Open hatches		WAC 296-304-05005-2	When employees are working around open hatches not protected by coamings to a height of 24 inches or around other large openings, the edge of the opening shall be guarded in the working area to a height of 36 to 42 inches, except where the use of such guards is made impracticable by the work actually in progress.	
	Unguarded edges of decks, platforms, flats, and similar surfaces	5 feet	WAC 296-304-05005-3	When employees are exposed to unguarded edges of decks, platforms, flats, and similar flat surfaces, more than 5 feet above a solid surface, the edges shall be guarded by adequate guardrails; unless the nature of the work in progress or the physical conditions prohibit the use or installation of such guardrails.	Guardrail requirements: - WAC 296-304-05001 (9)(a) & (b)
	Unguarded decks of vessels afloat	Always	WAC 296-304-05005-4	When employees are working near the unguarded edges of decks of vessels afloat, they shall be protected by buoyant personal flotation devices, meeting the requirements of WAC 296-304-09017 (1).	

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Shipbuilding and ship repair	Sections of bilges from which floor plates or gratings have been removed	Always	WAC 296-304-05005-5	Sections of bilges from which floor plates or gratings have been removed shall be guarded by guardrails except where they would interfere with work in progress. If these open sections are in a walkway at least two 10-inch planks placed side by side, or equivalent, shall be laid across the opening to provide a safe walking surface.	
	Grating, walkways and catwalks from which sections or ladders have been removed		WAC 296-304-05005-6	Gratings, walkways, and catwalks, from which sections or ladders have been removed, shall be barricaded with adequate guardrails.	
	Working surfaces	5 feet	WAC 296-304-05013-2 and WAC 296-304-09019	The employer must provide and ensure the use of fall protection when employees work aloft or elsewhere at elevations more than 5 feet above a solid surface.	

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Ski area facilities	Working at elevations	10 feet	WAC 296-59-050-5	Safety belts, lifelines, and lanyards which meet the requirements of ANSI A10.14 shall be provided and used whenever employees are working in locations which expose them to a fall of more than ten feet.	Employees will not be required to wear a safety belt and lanyard while riding on a standard lift chair while seated in the normal riding position.
				Safety nets meeting the requirements of ANSI A10.11 shall be used when other acceptable forms of fall protection are not useable. When used, safety nets shall extend a minimum of eight feet beyond the edge offering exposure, shall be hung with sufficient clearance to prevent user's contact with surfaces or objects below, and shall not be more than twenty-five feet below the fall exposure edge.	
Telecommunications	Elevated work	4 feet	WAC 296-32-24012-6-b	General. Safety belts and straps limiting falls to 2 feet or full body harnesses and lanyards shall be provided and the employer shall ensure their use when work is performed at positions more than 4 feet above ground, on poles, towers or other communication structures	No safety belts, safety straps or lanyards acquired after January 1, 1976, may be used unless they meet the tests set forth in chapter 296-32 WAC
Textile	Gray and white bins	Always	WAC 296-301-095	Guard rails conforming to WAC 296-24-750 through 296-24-75011, of the general safety and health standards, shall be provided where workers are required to plait by hand from the top of the bin so as to protect the worker from falling to a lower level.	
	Open tanks/Vats		WAC 296-301-195-1	Guardrails shall be provided for open tanks and vats which conform to the requirements of WAC 296-24-750 through 296-24-75011.	

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Window washing	Working at heights	Always and Before approaching the point of suspension	WAC 296-878-15025	<p>Make sure workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use fall arrest systems that meet the requirements of WAC 296-24-88050 mandatory Appendix C, Part I, Personal Fall Arrest Systems. - Inspect and use fall arrest equipment in accordance with the requirements of WAC 296-24-88050, mandatory Appendix C, Part I, Personal Fall Arrest Systems. - Assemble and wear their personal fall arrest equipment <u>before approaching the point of suspension</u>. - Are connected at all times to the fall arrest system while they are suspended. - Use an independent fall arrest system where the fall arrest anchorage is separate from the suspension system anchorage. - Operating powered platforms wear and use fall arrest systems <p>Boatswain's chair or rope descent system must be connected to the suspension line at all times.</p>	<p>Other applicable standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chapter 296-24 WAC, Part J-3 - Chapter 296-874, WAC Scaffolds