

TOOLBOX TALK, February 23rd, 2026

Training

There are no union trainings posted for Portland.

Check your records at fsstools.com under the *Training Records* tab to see what you need.

When they're available, sign up for classes, at the union training site or check schedules at fsstools.com.

Fall Protection Planning

Last week, we discussed Fall Protection Planning and reviewed key elements of creating a safe and effective plan. However, it's important to remember that even if a worker is wearing all the proper equipment, the plan fails if the system does not actually prevent them from hitting the ground in the event of a fall.

On one of our jobs last week, we identified a fall protection plan that did not account for total fall distance. Had a fall occurred, the outcome could have been disastrous.

Although the Self-Retracting Lifeline (SRL) was connected to an approved anchor point, the worker was positioned above the SRL. If the worker had fallen, there would have been significant slack before the SRL engaged. By the time the braking system activated, the worker could have already reached the ground. When planning for fall protection, it is critical to calculate total fall distance and verify that the system will stop the worker before contact with a lower level.

Example Calculation:

Assume:

- The anchor point is 10 feet above the worker's head.
- The worker is standing on a surface 10 feet above the ground.

This gives us 20 feet from the anchor point to the ground.

Now calculate the total fall clearance required:

- SRL housing drop below anchor: 1 foot
- SRL braking distance: 2 feet
- Shock absorber (deceleration distance): 3 feet
- Worker height: 6 feet

Total required fall clearance:

$1 + 2 + 3 + 6 = 12 \text{ feet}$

Since the total distance from the anchor to the ground is 20 feet, and 12 feet is required to safely arrest the fall, the worker would be stopped with an **8-foot safety margin**.

In every situation, this calculation must be performed to ensure the worker will not hit the ground before the system engages to fully arrest the fall.

There's an old saying: **"Safety is no accident."** When it comes to calculating fall distances, that statement really rings true.

The 20–20–20 Rule - Every 20 minutes - Take 20 seconds - To look 20 feet around you
Focus on your personal safety bubble.

STOP • LOOK • ACT

We want to hear about innovative ideas and safety wins. If you've come up with an innovation that saves time or improves safety, or if you've experienced a safety win in the field, let us know.

<https://www.fsstools.com/suggestion-box>.

[Toolbox Talk Submission](#)