

Safety Talk

Three-point technique to prevent falls from mobile equipment

Before you begin

This talk is appropriate for forklift operators, truck drivers, and operators of other equipment. For demonstration purposes have a piece of mobile equipment available to help make your discussion more effective.



Introduction

Slips, trips, and falls account for 20% of work injuries. This totals 13 million injuries per year. Climbing into and out of mobile equipment presents a common exposure to slips and falls. Inclement weather, greasy or broken steps, grab handles, and the rush of the workday make this a serious exposure.

Ask your audience: What kind of injuries could happen by falling out of a vehicle? How would these injuries affect your personal life? Would your favorite activities be affected? Would it affect your family?

Definitions

The three-point technique means three of your four limbs are always in contact with the vehicle - two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.

Discussion

The three-point technique is a simple and effective way to minimize the risk of falling. Use this technique if you are entering the cab of a forklift or truck, climbing onto the bed of a truck, or climbing into/onto any other piece of equipment.

When you are climbing, at least three limbs should always be in contact with the equipment. This could be two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand. This allows a person to have maximum stability and support, thereby reducing the likelihood of slipping and falling.

To use this technique the climber must be facing the equipment. You cannot have three points of contact if you are jumping off or sliding out of the seat.

Before you enter equipment, place any objects inside the vehicle – logbooks, production schedules, bar-code scanners, etc. Do the same when you exit. Leave the objects inside the vehicle until you are off the equipment. In addition, make sure you look before you exit.

What can the Employer do?

- Evaluate every truck and piece of equipment to ensure that hand holds and non-slip surfaces exist.
- Maintain the contact surfaces used to climb in and out of the equipment so that they are in good condition.
- Instruct workers to use the three-point technique.
- Install warning decals or signs in the cab reminding workers to use the three-point contact.
- Encourage employees to remind each other to safely mount and dismount equipment.

What can Employees do?

- Wear footwear appropriate to the job that gives good support and traction.
- Keep the steps and grab rails clean.
- Make sure the lights are working so you can see where you are climbing.
- Do not use the steering wheel, door frame, or control handles as handholds.
- Slow down and use extra caution in bad weather.
- Look for obstacles on the ground below before exiting.

Employee Don'ts

- Don't climb down with something in your free hand.
- Don't ever jump out which could cause you to land off balance and fall.
- Don't use tires or wheel hubs as a stepping surface.

Conclusion

Most slip and fall injuries are minor, however, thousands of people die from slips and falls each year. Old habits are hard to break. It may seem that you will gain time by rushing but taking the time to properly climb into and out of mobile equipment using the three-point technique may prevent you from becoming a slip and fall statistic. Where else could you use this three-point technique?

Group activity

- To reinforce the lesson, ask each participant to demonstrate the three-point technique.
- Discuss what you should do if you see someone not using the correct technique.
- Discuss where else you could use this three-point technique at work.

Resources

[Safety180-Three Points of Contact](#) video by the Colorado Department of Transportation
[ANSI B56 Industrial Truck Standards](#)
[Preventing Injuries and Deaths from Skid-Steer Loaders](#)