



Guardrails

Things to Discuss

Falls are the number one cause of serious injuries and death from injuries in construction.

Guardrails as a Control

Guard rails are often the best and most convenient means of fall protection.

Where possible, guard rails must be installed:

- along the open edges of roofs and floors;
- on formwork, scaffolds, and other work surfaces;
- where an open-sided floor, working platform, runway, walkway or balcony is over 1.22 meters above the existing floor or ground level;
- over open tanks containing harmful substances or over open tanks 1.22 meters or more in depth;
- where a stairway ends in direct proximity to dangerous traffic or other hazards; and
- around trenches or excavations greater than 1.22 meters

Guard rails must:

- be secured so that it cannot move in any direction if it is struck or if a point on it comes in contact with a worker, materials or equipment;
- have a top rail located at least 0.9 meters but not more than 1.1 meters above the working surface and an intermediate rail located midway between the top rail and the working surface; and
- have toe boards installed at least 10 centimeters high if

the guardrail is on a walkway or platform that's over machinery or work areas. This prevents items such as tools being kicked over the edge and possibly hitting a worker.

Sometimes guard rails have to be removed to land material or make installations along floor or roof edges. The open edge should be roped off and marked with warning signs. All workers inside that area at the time must wear fall protection and be tied off.

Be sure to include guard rails on your work site inspection form. By conducting regular inspections, it ensures that guard rail systems are in tip top condition and set up properly, whether that is as per OHS Regulation 28 or manufactures instructions.



Illustration courtesy of IHSA