

Working at Heights Training Standard



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Scope

The Working at Heights Training Standard outlines the minimum training requirements for a training provider's program to be approved by the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB). This is a voluntary standard. Current Saskatchewan occupational health and safety legislation does not require compliance with this standard.

However, subsection 9-3(4) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* requires employers to train workers before they perform work that requires a fall protection system. You can find further guidance in subsection 1-2(1), Definitions and Interpretation, in the definitions for "train" and "competent."

The memorandum of understanding between the WCB and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety mandates these organizations, through the Worksafe Saskatchewan partnership, to implement provincial strategies aimed at reducing the Total injury rate, fatalities, serious injuries and time loss injuries in the province.

This standard represents WorkSafe Saskatchewan's commitment to creating sustainable change through awareness, education and training in the province.

1. Introduction

The Working at Heights Training Standard supports consistent, high-quality training for Saskatchewan training providers by outlining the core competencies required for working at heights.

Employers must ensure workers complete all job-specific training beyond the requirements of this standard.

Training providers may customize training programs based on this standard to address sector-specific hazards and the equipment and machinery commonly used in that sector, as long as the programs achieve the learning outcomes outlined in this standard.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Working at Heights Training Standard is to establish a minimum standard for high-quality and consistent training for workers who work at heights in Saskatchewan.

The purpose of a working at heights training program that meets the requirements set out in this standard is to:

- Strengthen workplace safety culture by elevating the profile and importance of preventing falls from heights.
- Provide workers who may face falling from heights hazards with adequate knowledge about fall hazards and general safety practices to work safely at heights.
- Provide workers who use fall protection equipment with sufficient knowledge about its purpose and use.
- Reduce the number of fall-from-heights incidents, injuries and fatalities.

3. Overview

The Working at Heights Training Standard has a modular format so learners can complete core theory training separately from practical training elements. There are two modules: Working at Heights Basic Theory and Working at Heights Practical.

3.1. Working at Heights Basic Theory module

The Working at Height Basic Theory module contains:

- a. Roles, rights and responsibilities related to working at heights under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.
- b. General hazard recognition for working at heights.
- c. Hierarchy of controls.
- d. Safety procedures for warning methods and physical barriers.
- e. Barriers and safety nets.
- f. Safety procedures for ladders and similar equipment (platforms, swing stage, scaffolding, etc.).

3.2. Working at Heights Practical module

The Working at Heights Practical module contains:

- a. fall protection systems
- b. personal fall protection equipment
- c. anchor points
- d. work positioning systems, ladders, work access and platforms
- e. rescue planning

4. Requirements

The Working at Heights Basic Theory module must be successfully completed before the Working at Heights Practical module is taken.

Employers must supplement any training program that meets this training program standard with additional information, instruction and training to cover workplace-specific policies, procedures and equipment related to working at heights. In addition, employers must ensure that they meet the training and other requirements in *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.

5. Design

The training program must be designed to allow learners to achieve the learning outcomes set out in this standard for the Working at Heights Basic Theory module and the Working at Heights Practical module, if applicable.

The training program must meet these criteria:

- a. Comply with adult learning principles:
 - i. Ensure learners know why they need to learn specific content and its relevance to them and their workplace.
 - ii. Relate learning to participants' own experiences in situations that simulate application in the workplace (considering experiences of young and new workers).
 - iii. Challenge learners using a variety of activities that allow for participation, feedback and interaction.
 - iv. Recognize limits of attention span and different ways that adults learn.
 - v. Use realistic activities and tools to support the transfer of learning to the workplace.

- b. Use a language and literacy level appropriate for learners.
- c. Keep content accurate and current, with all legal and technical information referenced and verified.
- d. Use a variety of teaching aids such as audio visuals, equipment, safety devices and measuring and monitoring equipment.
- e. Ensure learner materials follow principles of instructional writing and good graphic design.
- f. Comply with the requirements of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*.

6. Delivery mode

Regardless of the delivery mode, all approved working at heights training programs must meet the requirements of this standard and the delivery mode must support the learner's ability to attain the applicable learning outcomes.

6.1. In-person learning

For a working at heights training program, the maximum ratio of learners to instructors will be 12 to 1.

The following are the minimum hours for training delivery:

- a. Working at Heights Basic Theory module — 3.0 hours
- b. Working at Heights Practical module — 3.5 hours

Timing for delivery of this training program may be extended for various reasons, such as the amount of equipment available for demonstration of learning outcomes, instructor experience or the learning needs of the training participants.

6.2. eLearning and blended learning

eLearning is only an acceptable delivery method for the Working at Heights Basic Theory module if it includes provisions for interactivity with a qualified instructor. eLearning is not an acceptable delivery method for the Working at Heights Practical module.

When eLearning is combined with in-person training, the result is referred to as blended learning. For a blended learning training program, the two sections of the course must be well integrated. For blended learning, evaluation must support and validate that the learning outcomes covered by the eLearning portion of the course have been adequately met by the learner.

7. Resource materials

Training providers must develop these resource materials for instructors and learners.

7.1. Learner materials

Learner materials must:

- a. Clearly describe learning outcomes, agenda, training content, evaluation and testing.
- b. Clearly indicate the date and version number of the materials.
- c. Include, at a minimum:
 - i. Terms and definitions.
 - ii. Worksheets for learning activities, exercises, role-plays and case studies.
 - iii. Job aids, tools and templates.
 - iv. Excerpts from *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* relevant to working at heights in the sectors in which learners work.
 - v. A participant manual.

7.2. Instructor materials

Instructor materials must:

- a. Clearly describe learning outcomes and training content,
- b. Clearly describe instructional methods, learning activities and lesson plan timing,
- c. Clearly indicate the date and version number of the materials, and
- d. Include, at a minimum:
 - i. An instructor manual and lesson plans with detailed, step-by-step instructions to guide the instructor through the lessons, including materials used to deliver the topic, instructional methods, learning activities, timing and required equipment.
 - ii. Audio-visual resources.
 - iii. Presentation materials.
 - iv. Answer sheets for the learning activities, exercises, role-plays, case studies and tests.
 - v. Evaluation tools.
 - vi. Current versions of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* for reference.
 - vii. Manufacturers' instructions for the equipment used by the instructor to deliver the approved training program.

8. Equipment

For the Working at Heights Practical module, learners must have hands-on, practical experience and receive training on the proper use, care and limitations of the approved personal protective equipment (PPE) listed below.

For the Working at Heights Practical module, training providers must ensure all approved personal protective equipment and other required equipment used during a training session:

- a. Meets the requirements of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, as applicable,
- b. Indicates the technical standard with which it complies on a decal, physical tag or by other means.
- c. Is regularly maintained and in good working order according to manufacturer's specifications and regulatory requirements.
- d. Is clearly identified and labeled as damaged or deficient if used only for training demonstration purposes.
- e. Has the appropriate manufacturer's instructions available.

If learners bring their own approved personal protective equipment to the approved training program, it must also meet the above criteria.

8.1. Required equipment for the Working at Heights Practical module

Training providers must use the equipment listed below to deliver the Working at Heights Practical module and provide it at a ratio of 1 to 3 (at least four sets of equipment for 12 learners).

- Classification "A" full-body harnesses with tongue buckles (in a variety of styles and sizes to accommodate a wide range of body types).
- Classification "A" full-body harnesses with mating buckles (in a variety of styles and sizes to accommodate a wide range of body types).
- Various lanyards (such as those without energy absorbers, with various levels of energy absorbers, Y lanyards, tie-back lanyards and self-retracting lanyards).
- Lifelines with snap hooks.
- Fall arresters (rope grabs).
- Carabiners.
- Temporary anchors.

8.2. Additional equipment

The equipment listed below includes examples of some of the standard types of equipment that should be made available so that learners become familiar with their locks and functions.

- Full-body harnesses (for example, **A**rrest attachment **D**escent control **E**nter or exit **L**adder **P**ositioning (ADELP) and other non-Classification “A” harnesses).
- Various (automatic and manual) fall arresters (for example, rope grabs).
- Various lifelines (such as those with a carabiner and thimble or snap hooks for learning purposes).
- Suspension trauma relief mechanisms.
- Various hooks (such as a snap hook with swivel and a rebar hook).
- Temporary anchors (such as a cross-arm anchor connector, a one-time-use roof anchor and a disposable concrete anchor).
- Ladder that meets the design, performance, test and marking requirements of CSA Standard Z11-12: Portable Ladders (Grade 1, Grade 1A, or Grade 1AA).
- Self-retracting lifelines (SRLs) and those with leading-edge capability (SRL-LEs) that meet CSA Z259.2.2-17 (R2022).

8.3. Damaged equipment

The equipment listed below must be used in the delivery of the Working at Heights Practical module so that learners are able to identify and inspect this equipment for damage.

- full-body harnesses
- lanyards (with and without energy absorbers)
- fall arresters (for example, rope grabs)
- lifelines
- anchorage connectors
- carabiners and snap hooks

9. Learning outcomes

The training program must achieve these learning outcomes.

Employers must supplement any training program that meets the requirements of this training program standard with additional information, instruction and training on workplace-specific policies, procedures and equipment for working at heights.

9.1. Working at Heights Basic Theory module

9.1.1. Roles, rights and responsibilities

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Identify the roles and responsibilities of the employer, supervisor, worker, contractor and supplier with respect to working safely at heights.
- b. Describe the three worker rights with regard to working at heights and how they can exercise them.
- c. Explain that all workers have a duty to report to their supervisor or employer any fall hazard or defect in fall prevention and protection equipment that they are aware of, and which may endanger themselves or another worker.
- d. Recognize that information about the legislative framework and enforcement of workplace health and safety is available on the ministry's website.
- e. Explain that all workers who work at heights must receive site-specific orientation from their employer.

9.1.2. Identification of the hazards of working at heights

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Recognize hazards of falling.
- b. Identify other conditions where workers are exposed to fall hazards, including working near skylights, fragile work surfaces and over water, machinery, electrical equipment and hazardous substances or objects.
- c. Describe types of incidents, related injuries and high-energy related to falls from heights.
- d. Identify the frequency, severity and consequences of injuries and fatalities due to falls from heights.
- e. Explain, using case studies, the impact of falls from heights on families, society, workplace morale and employer reputation.
- f. Explain the role and importance of safe work plans in identifying potential fall hazards and communicating them to workers and supervisors.

9.1.3. Eliminating or controlling the hazards of working at heights

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Explain the concept of direct and alternate controls, and the importance of the hierarchy of controls related to working safely at heights.
- b. Explain how to control hazards using elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering, administration or PPE to protect workers working at heights.
- c. Explain the limitations of personal protective equipment.
- d. Apply the hierarchy of controls to choose the preferred method of working safely at heights, using realistic workplace scenarios.

9.1.4. Warning methods and physical barriers

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Describe types of warning methods and explain their appropriate uses.
- b. Describe types of physical barriers and explain their appropriate uses.
- c. Identify the characteristics and explain the appropriate uses of permanent and temporary guardrails.
- d. Explain what precautions are necessary when installing, relocating or removing guardrails or protective coverings.

9.1.5. Barriers and other fixed equipment

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Identify situations in which control zones, barriers, guardrails and safety nets would be appropriate.
- b. Identify regulatory requirements for control zones, barriers, guardrails and safety nets.
- c. Identify limitations of control zones, barriers, guardrails and safety nets.
- d. Identify specific strength and design requirements for temporary guardrails.

9.1.6. Ladders and similar equipment

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Identify a minimum of three types of portable ladders and explain the limitations of each.
- b. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of different types of portable ladders for working at heights.
- c. Describe appropriate portable ladders for tasks.

- d. Identify that there are different regulatory requirements for portable ladders in different sectors.
- e. Explain that regulatory requirements may restrict the type of work that may be performed for working at heights from a portable ladder.
- f. Identify and assess situations in which portable ladders can be used safely at heights, using the hierarchy of controls and case studies.
- g. Identify situations where it would be unsafe to use portable ladders and explain which alternative means of access are more appropriate.
- h. Explain the steps to properly inspect different types of portable ladders.
- i. Describe how to properly care for, store and transport ladders.
- j. Describe how to safely position and use different types of portable ladders.
- k. Explain the need for additional workplace-specific information, instruction or training by the employer for using ladders.
- l. Identify common causes of fall injuries while using ladders (for example, missing the last step on a ladder, overreaching on a ladder).

9.2. Working at Heights Practical module

9.2.1 Fall protection systems

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Explain when a travel restraint system or fall arrest system would be required and the essential elements of each.
- b. Identify the regulatory requirements for fall protection systems, where applicable.
- c. Explain the need for additional workplace-specific information, instruction or training by the employer when using fall protection systems.

9.2.2. Approved personal fall protection equipment

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Explain the limitations and the appropriate application of travel restraint, fall restricting and fall arrest systems.
- b. Identify the fall protection regulatory requirements, where applicable, for travel restraint and fall arrest systems.
- c. Describe the specific components of fall protection systems.
- d. Describe the steps required for the proper set-up and use of fall protection systems.
- e. Describe the proper maintenance and storage of fall protection equipment.

- f. Demonstrate the ability to calculate the total fall distance and the required fall clearance to prevent a worker from striking the ground or an object below.
- g. Define “bottoming out,” the pendulum effect, harness suspension, suspension trauma and how to calculate free-fall distance.
- h. Demonstrate the ability to inspect and identify deficiencies in the following industry-standard personal fall protection equipment:
 - i. full-body harness
 - ii. lifeline
 - iii. fall arresters (for example, rope grabs)
 - iv. shock absorbing lanyard
 - v. carabiner
 - vi. self-retracting lifeline
 - vii. anchor and anchor straps
- i. Describe the steps to select adequate equipment, including industry-standard personal fall protection equipment, full-body harness and lanyard.
- j. Demonstrate how to correctly don and doff (put on and take off) industry-standard personal fall protection equipment, including full-body harness and lanyard.
- k. Describe how to protect horizontal and vertical lifelines while in use.
- l. Describe the appropriate selection, set-up and use of a fall arrester for personal fall protection systems and ladder use.
- m. Explain the proper use and selection of self-retractable lanyards and the importance of leading-edge capability.
- n. Demonstrate how to maintain tie-off at all times to an anchor point when changing anchor points, considering the location of the worker’s body in relation to the anchor point, the fall hazard and the direction of travel.
- o. Describe which harness is to be used based on the scope of work, for example, **A**rrest attachment **D**escent control **E**nter or exit **L**adder **P**ositioning (ADELP) and where required, R (flash arc resistance) and compatible arc-resistant connectors that may be required and used.
- p. Describe possible situations where additional workplace-specific information, instruction or training are required when asked to use fall protection systems in the workplace.

References: Section 7-16, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Personal fall arrest systems; Section 7-17, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Full-body harness, Section 7-18, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Snap hooks on personal fall arrest systems; and Section 7-9, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Lanyards.

9.2.3. Anchor points

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Explain what an anchor point is and identify three basic types of anchor systems used for working at heights, including:
 - designed fixed supports,
 - temporary fixed supports (including portable and mobile anchor systems), and
 - existing structural features verified by a professional engineer or competent person.
- b. Explain the differences between permanent anchors, temporary fixed supports and existing structural features used as anchor points.
- c. Explain the appropriate location and use of anchor points.
- d. Provide examples of appropriate and inappropriate anchor points.
- e. Identify the consequences of using inappropriate items as anchor points.
- f. Explain the importance of following manufacturer's instructions when installing new anchor points and, where necessary, obtaining approval from a professional engineer.
- g. Explain the importance of seeking information before using new anchor points.

References: Section 9-5, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Anchor Points and Anchor Plates.

9.2.4. Work access equipment and platforms

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Use the hierarchy of controls to identify the types of equipment that may be available to safely perform tasks at heights, including elevating work platforms, aerial devices, scaffolds, ladders, suspended access equipment and boatswain's chairs.
- b. Provide examples of the types of personal fall protection equipment that is required to safely work at heights on work access equipment and platforms.
- c. Explain how to safely carry, position and secure a portable ladder, and describe the steps for safe use.
- d. Explain that workers may require training when using work access equipment, platforms, suspended access equipment or similar additional workplace-specific or equipment-specific information.

References: Section 12-25, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Aerial devices and elevating work platforms.

9.2.5. Rescue planning

By the end of this session, instructors must ensure learners are able to:

- a. Explain the purpose of a rescue plan.
- b. Explain the roles and responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers regarding a fall rescue plan and emergency procedures.
- c. Identify key components of a fall rescue plan.
- d. Explain that each project where workers rely on fall arrest systems or safety nets must have a site-specific rescue plan and that information, instruction or training on the site-specific rescue plan is important.

References: Section 9-3, *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Fall protection plan.

10. Learner evaluation

The training program must include a plan for learner evaluation that meets the requirements below. There must be a variety of evaluation methods available to the instructor that are appropriate to the learning outcomes.

10.1. Written tests and alternative evaluation methods

- a. Learners must complete a written test either at the end of each module or at the end of the training program to verify that they understand key concepts. Learners must obtain a minimum score of 75 per cent to successfully complete the training program. After a learner successfully completes the test, the instructor must review any incorrect answers with the learner to successfully complete the training program.
- b. The instructor may use alternative evaluations to written tests for learners with language, literacy or accommodation needs, to verify understanding of key concepts. The alternative evaluation methods must be clearly outlined in the evaluation plan and the instructor must document the results.

10.2. Evaluation of demonstration learning outcomes

- a. Each learning outcome requiring demonstration (Sections 9.2.2(f), 9.2.2(h), 9.2.2(j) and 9.2.2(n)) must be performed satisfactorily and documented for each learner in order to successfully complete the Working at Heights Practical module.
- b. The instructor may use alternative evaluation methods for learners with language, literacy or accommodation needs, to verify satisfactory demonstration of learning outcomes by the learner. The evaluation plan must clearly outline these evaluation methods and the instructor must document the results.

11. Validity and refresher training

Learners who successfully complete an approved working at heights training program must periodically refresh their training to maintain its validity. This supports learners in maintaining their foundational knowledge and skills for working safely at heights.

11.1. Validity of the training program

Successful completion of a working at heights training program requires completion of both the Working at Heights Basic Theory module (Section 9.1) and the Working at Heights Practical module (Section 9.2) in accordance with the criteria set out in this standard and the WorkSafe approved training provider program. Working at heights training is valid for three years from the date of successful completion.

11.2. Refresher training

To complete refresher training, workers must successfully complete the Working at Heights Practical module (Section 9.2) in accordance with the criteria set out in this standard and the WorkSafe approved training provider program. Successful completion of the refresher training will revalidate a learner's working at heights training for another three-year period from the date of successful completion of the refresher.

Learners must have successfully completed both modules of an approved Working at Heights Training Standard to be eligible for refresher training.

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Appendix A: Glossary of terms — general

Blended learning

Describes the practice of using several training delivery mediums in a single training program. It typically refers to the combination of classroom instruction and eLearning.

Distance learning

An educational situation in which the instructor and learners are separated by time, location, or both. Education or training courses are delivered to remote locations via synchronous instruction.

eLearning (electronic learning)

A term covering a wide set of applications and processes such as web-based learning, computer-based learning and digital collaboration.

In-person training

Usually refers to traditional classroom training, in which an instructor teaches a course to a room of training participants. The term is used synonymously with on-site training and classroom training and instructor-led training.

Module

A unit of instruction that can be measured, evaluated for change, assembled to form complete courses, or bypassed as a whole, and usually is intended to teach one or a group of skills or areas of knowledge.

Instructor

A person who delivers training programs.

Qualification

A skill, quality, or attribute that makes somebody suitable for a job, activity or task.

Subject-matter expert (SME)

A person who has extensive knowledge and skills in a particular subject area.

Appendix B: Glossary of terms — working at heights standards

Fall arrest system

An assembly of components joined together so that when the assembly is connected to a fixed support and is capable of arresting a worker's fall..

Fall restricting system

A type of fall arrest system that has been designed to limit a worker's fall to a specified distance.

Fixed support

A permanent or temporary structure or a component of such a structure that can withstand all loads and forces the structure or component is intended to support or resist and is sufficient to protect a worker's health and safety and includes equipment or devices that are securely fastened to the structure or component.

Full-body harness

A device that can arrest an accidental vertical or near vertical fall of a worker and which can guide and distribute the impact forces of the fall by means of leg and shoulder strap supports and an upper dorsal suspension assembly which, after the arrest, will not by itself permit the release or further lowering of the worker.

Guardrail system

An assembly of components joined together to provide a barrier to prevent a worker from falling from the edge of a surface.

Safety factor

The ratio of the failure load to the specified load or rated load.

Safety net

A safety net that complies with Section 9-15 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations*, Safety nets and is located and supported in such a way that it arrests the fall of a worker who may fall into it without endangering the worker.

Travel restraint system

An assembly of components capable of restricting a worker's movement on a work surface and preventing the worker from reaching a location from which they could fall.

Find more resources and stay informed by subscribing to the
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