



August 5 — There Is No Such Thing as “Just for a Minute”

A Plant Contracted Electrician was working above 4 ft. without fall protection

We had a discussion with the contractor and plant safety about the 4' fall protection standard. Anything over 4' you must be tied off.

Falls don't happen because people plan to get hurt...

They happen because someone believes they'll be okay "just this once."

A contracted electrician was observed performing work more than four feet above the ground without using the required fall protection. Whether the task was expected to take thirty seconds or thirty minutes, the hazard remained the same—a fall from elevation can change a life in an instant.

Many fall incidents happen during routine tasks. Workers become focused on completing the job, retrieving a tool, making one connection, or finishing one last adjustment. As familiarity with the work increases, the perceived risk often decreases—even though the actual risk has not changed.

Fall protection isn't required because every elevated task results in a fall. It's required because no one can predict when a slip, a loss of balance, or an unexpected movement will occur. Taking the extra minute to properly protect yourself is always less costly than the consequences of a preventable fall.

Hazards

- Falls from elevated work surfaces
- Serious injury or fatality
- Overconfidence during routine tasks
- Working without required fall protection
- Assuming a short task doesn't require protection
- Complacency caused by familiarity

Words of Wisdom

The amount of time spent at height doesn't determine the risk. The distance to the ground does.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever been tempted to skip fall protection because the task would "only take a minute"?
- What shortcuts do people commonly take when working at height?
- How can coworkers respectfully intervene when they see someone working without proper fall protection?
- What factors cause experienced workers to become complacent around fall hazards?
- What can our crew do today to ensure everyone goes home safely after working at elevation?

Closing Thought

A fall doesn't care how experienced you are or how quickly you planned to finish. If the job requires fall protection, wear it every time.