



July 30 — What Falls From Above Doesn't Give a Warning

Another contractor was dropping items from scaffolding without danger tape

Stopped contractor and told him he needed to put up danger tape if overhead items were going to be dropped

Dropped objects don't have to be large...

They only have to hit the wrong place.

During overhead work, a contractor was lowering—or allowing—tools and materials to fall from scaffolding without first establishing a barricaded danger zone below. Anyone walking through the area could have been struck by a falling object without warning.

Fortunately, the unsafe condition was recognized before someone was injured. The work was stopped, the area was barricaded, and the crew discussed safer methods for handling materials at elevation.

When working above others, it's easy to focus on the task in front of you and forget about the people below. A tape measure, socket, bolt, or small hand tool may not seem dangerous while it's in your hand, but once gravity takes over, even a small object can cause a serious injury.

Barricades don't just protect the crew performing the work—they protect everyone else who has no idea a hazard exists overhead.

Hazards

- Dropped objects
- Struck by hazards
- Overhead work
- Failure to establish barricades
- Pedestrian exposure
- Improper material handling

Words of Wisdom

If work is taking place overhead, protect the area below. Barricades, communication, and proper material handling help ensure that everyone, not just the crew doing the work goes home safely.

Pause and Think

- What types of objects could become serious hazards if dropped from overhead?
- When should a barricaded danger zone be established?
- What are safer alternatives to dropping tools or materials from elevation?
- How can crews make sure people below are protected before overhead work begins?
- If you saw someone working overhead without a barricade, what would you do?

Closing Thought

Gravity doesn't make exceptions. Every object dropped from above has the potential to injure someone below. Protect the people who can't see the hazard coming.