

# OSHA's Walking-Working Surfaces and Personal Protective Equipment (Fall Protection Systems) Standards

On November 17, 2016 the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) released a [final rule](#) updating walking-working surfaces regulations for general industry. This update emphasized worker protection from fall hazards in general industry by updating, clarifying, and adding new regulations for training and inspections. The final rule creates consistency between general industry and construction regulations, helping employers and workers who operate in both industries.

Listed below are the effective dates of the provisions:

UPDATE	TIMELINE
Eliminating the use of guardrails as a primary fall protection method	January 17, 2017
Choosing from accepted fall protection systems that may work best in a particular situation	
Allowing use of non-conventional fall protection in certain situations, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas on low-slope roofs for temporary or infrequent work</li> <li>• When guardrails, safety nets, or personal fall protection systems are not feasible or create a greater hazard</li> </ul>	
Training exposed workers on fall hazards	May 17, 2017
Training workers on using fall protection equipment	May 17, 2017
Inspecting and certifying permanent anchorages for rope descent systems	November 20, 2017
Installing personal fall arrest or ladder safety systems on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New fixed ladders over 24 feet</li> <li>• Replacement ladders/ladder sections</li> </ul>	November 19, 2018
Equipping cages, wells, personal fall arrest, or ladder safety systems on existing fixed ladders over 24 feet	November 19, 2018
Replacing cages and wells (used as fall protection) with personal fall arrest systems or ladder safety systems on all new and existing fixed ladders over 24 feet	November 18, 2036

Visit the [Federal Register](#) for additional information on the final rule. You can also visit the general industry walking-working surfaces regulations at [29 CFR 1910 Subpart D](#).

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org>.