Fall Prevention

Introduction:

Lives can be altered in a split-second and falls often happen when least expected. Falling through an opening in the floor, slipping on a loose rug or floor mat, tripping over a cable extended across a walkway, slipping on a wet floor or falling due to a missing guardrail, lack of warning signs, or poor lighting are just a few of the accidents that happen daily in the workplace or at home. Falls occur in almost every type of workplace, and are the most common cause of injury or death. Falls can happen on the same level or from a higher to a lower level, and falls from heights are usually most serious. According to the National Safety Council, injuries as a result of slips and falls account for almost $70 billion per year in the United States with approximately $15 billion spent on disability claims. It is obvious from this data that falls create a considerable financial burden in the form of medical costs, worker's compensation, and lost production.

Discussion Points:

- Life altering experience
- Economic impact
- OSHA Regulations for Fall Protection
- Employer and Employee Responsibilities

Discussion:

OSHA requires that companies provide a safe workplace for all employees, and provides guidelines in CFR 1926.501, Standard Regulations for Fall Protection in the General Industry, which can be viewed on their website at www.osha.gov. OSHA reviews and modifies safety standards on a regular basis, so it is important that companies stay up-to-date with the changes. This is especially important when protecting your business from potential lawsuits.

It is the responsibility of the employer to have a fall prevention policy and training requirements. Prevention is the main objective, and should include strategies to reduce fall injuries, provide the right equipment and proper personal protective equipment, include a Risk Assessment, and training. The Risk Assessment is the best way to identify potential fall hazards, discuss the results with staff, and follow up with correcting the hazards immediately. All assessments must be documented, including the date, authorized person who performed the assessment, and what was evaluated. Training must be provided for all new employees and retraining when there are new regulations, or a change in operation or equipment. The training must be provided in a language that the worker will understand. Employees are responsible for proper use and maintenance of equipment, following procedures, rules and regulations, housekeeping, proper behavior, best practices, and use of appropriate PPE. Take the extra step to protect yourself and your coworkers.

As always, stay safe out there!