

# OSHA Fall Protection Standards Bridge Contractors Must Know



No single standard of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) covers all the fall protection requirements a bridge contractor needs to know. A bridge contractor must be familiar with at least four subparts of OSHA standards. Further, OSHA standards are minimum standards, so knowledge of several standards of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) covering fall protection is often also required. The table below provides a general overview of the relevant OSHA standards.

## OSHA Fall Protection Standards for Bridge Contractors (29 CFR 1926)

| OSHA Subpart   | Situation   | Requirements                        | OSHA Standards             |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Subpart E<br/>Personal<br/>Floatation<br/>Device (PFD)</b>      | *Working over water where there is a hazard of drowning                                     | All situations require a PFD        | 1926.106(a)                |
|  | *Where a personal fall arrest system (PFAS) is used 100% of the time and no drowning hazard | All situations do not require a PFD | 1926.106(a)<br>1926.501(b) |
|  | *Where safety nets are used for fall protection   | All situations require a PFD        | 1926.106(a)                |
| <b>Subpart L<br/>Scaffold Fall<br/>Protection<br/>Requirements</b> | Scaffolding   | 10 ft (3.0 m)                       | 1926.451(g)                |
|  | Suspended scaffolding of any type   | 10 ft (3.0 m)                       | 1926.451(g)(1)(i)&(ii)     |
|  | Aerial lifts - NOTE: personal fall protection must satisfy criteria in 1926.502(d) & (e)    | All situations                      | 1926.453(b)(2)(v)          |
| <b>Subpart M<br/>Fall Protection<br/>Requirements</b>              | **Leading edges on bridge decks   | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(2)             |
|  | Bridge decks, unprotected sides and edges   | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(1)             |
|  | Holes/floor (bridge deck) openings 2" and greater   | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(4)             |
|  | Formwork and reinforcing steel  | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(5)             |
|  | Ramps, walkways, and runways  | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(6)             |
|  | Working above dangerous equipment   | All situations                      | 1926.501(b)(8)             |
|  | **Precast concrete erection   | 6 ft (1.8 m)                        | 1926.501(b)(12)            |
| <b>Subpart Q<br/>Concrete &amp;<br/>Masonry<br/>Requirements</b>   | Impalement hazard (must be guarded)   | Any exposure                        | 1926.701(b)(1)             |
| <b>***Subpart R<br/>Steel<br/>Erection</b>                         | General Requirements  | 15 ft (4.6 m)                       | 1926.760(a)(1)             |
|  | Connectors  | 15 ft (4.6 m) to 30 ft (9.2 m)      | 1926.760(b)                |
|  | Controlled Deck Zone  | 15 ft (4.6 m) to 30 ft (9.2 m)      | 1926.760(c)                |
|  | Fall Protection Systems   | Varies                              | See App. G                 |
|  | Perimeter Safety Cables   | Varies                              | See App. G                 |

\*Working over water see [WWW.OSHA.GOV](http://WWW.OSHA.GOV) for letter of interpretation dated September 28, 1999 linked to 1926.106(a).

\*\*Leading edge work requires conventional fall protection, unless the employer can demonstrate it is not feasible. Where the employer determines it is not feasible, a site-specific written plan in accordance with 1926.502(k) must be developed, implemented, and supervised by a competent person.

\*\*\*See OSHA's [WWW.OSHA.GOV](http://WWW.OSHA.GOV) eTool and Directive CPL 02 01 034 for more detailed information and NIOSH Campaign to Prevent Falls in Construction [WWW.CDC.GOV/NIOSH/](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/NIOSH/)

### ARTBA Work Zone Safety Consortium

- American Road and Transportation Builders Association ■ U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration
- National Asphalt Pavement Association ■ Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- International Union of Operating Engineers ■ FOF Communications
- Community College Consortium For Health and Safety Training ■ American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

This material is based on work supported by the Federal Highway Administration under Grant Agreement No. DTFH61-11-H-00029. Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Federal Highway Administration. This publication does not constitute a national standard, specification, or regulation.