

**Strategic Construction Solutions Toolbox Talk #17:**  Fall Protection Clearance Distance

*[Reference OSHA 1926.502]*

**Fall Protection Clearance Distance**

**Calculating PFAS Clearance Distance**

Personal Fall Arrest Systems (PFAS) must be used in accordance with the following OSHA requirements:

*OSHA Construction Standard 1926.501 (b)(1) "Each employee on a walking/working surface (horizontal and vertical surface) with an unprotected side or edge which is 6 feet (1.8 m) or more above a lower level shall be protected from falling by the use of guardrail systems, safety net systems, or personal fall arrest systems."*

*OSHA Construction Standard 1926.502 (d)(16) "Personal fall arrest systems, when stopping a fall, shall: limit maximum arresting force on an employee to 1,800 pounds when used with a body harness; be rigged such that an employee can neither free fall more than 6 feet, nor contact any lower level; bring an employee to a complete stop and limit maximum deceleration distance an employee travels to 3.5 feet; and, have sufficient strength to withstand twice the potential impact energy of an employee free falling a distance of 6 feet, or the free fall distance permitted by the system, whichever is less."*

It is important that employees be trained in calculating PFAS clearance distance. In the event of a fall it is important to ensure that the worker will not free fall more than 6 feet. Free falling more than 6 feet has broken workers necks from impact force. If workers contact lower levels the PFAS is useless. Use a deceleration device to ensure forces do not exceed 1,800 pounds. Use this chart from when calculating PFAS clearance distance.



*Photo Courtesy of: https://www.millerfallprotection.com/smart-solutions/connecting-devices/calculating-fall-clearance-3*

# TOOL BOX TALK ATTENDENCE FORM

**Toolbox Topic Covered:** \_\_\_\_ Fall Protection Clearance Distance

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