ALGONQUIN COLLEGE | Occupational Health and Safety

FALL PROTECTION PROGRAM

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4	September 2026	Updated to current legislation and regulations, removed outdated information.	Allisha Wilson
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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this program is to establish requirements for identifying and controlling fall hazards and preventing injuries resulting from falls while working at heights.

This program establishes minimum requirements for fall hazard assessments, selection and use of appropriate fall protection measures, equipment inspection and maintenance, training, and emergency rescue planning.

1.1 Document Authority

This program is established under the authority of Algonquin College Occupational Health and Safety and forms part of the College's Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS).

The program supports the College's commitment to providing a safe and healthy workplace and learning environment and is developed in accordance with applicable occupational health and safety legislation, regulations, recognized standards, and College policies and procedures.

2.0 Scope

This Program applies to all Algonquin College employees, contractors, and other persons who may be exposed to a fall hazard while performing work on College property or on behalf of the College.

The Program applies to work activities where a person may be exposed to a fall from a height or into an opening, excavation, or other hazard that could result in injury.

Departments shall ensure that fall hazards within their areas of responsibility are identified and controlled in accordance with this Program and applicable requirements.

Contractors performing work on behalf of the College shall comply with this Program and applicable College requirements.

3.0 References

3.1 Legislation

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. O.1
- Ontario Regulation 851 – Industrial Establishments
    - Sections 85-87
- Ontario Regulation 213/91 – Construction Projects (where applicable)
- Ontario regulation 297/13 – Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and Training
    - Including working at heights training requirements applicable to workers on construction projects who may use specified fall-protection methods

3.2 Standards

- Applicable CSA standards for fall protection equipment and systems

3.3 Guidance Documents

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), Fall Protection

- Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), Working at Heights/Fall Protection (where applicable)

3.4 Related Algonquin College Documents

This Program should be read in conjunction with other applicable College occupational health and safety programs, procedures, and standards, including but not limited to:

- Ladder Safety Training (YOW)
- Working at Heights Training (outsourced)
- Personal Protective Equipment Program (PPE-01)
- Risk Management Programs/Standards
- Emergency Response Procedures, where applicable

4.0 Definitions

Fall Arrest System – a system designed to stop a person after a fall has occurred and minimize the risk of injury. A fall arrest system may include a full-body harness, connecting device, lifeline, anchor, and other compatible components.

Fall Hazard – A condition or situation where a person may fall from a height or into an opening, excavation, or other hazard that could result in injury.

Fall Protection System – A system or combination of measures used to prevent or minimize the risk of a fall. Fall protection systems may include guardrails, travel restraint, fall restraint, fall arrest, or other measures permitted by applicable requirements.

Fall Restraint System - A system that prevents a worker from reaching an unprotected edge or location from which a fall could occur.

Full-Body Harness - A body support device designed to distribute fall-arrest forces over the thighs, pelvis, chest, and shoulder and to provide attachment points for a fall protection system.

Lifeline – A flexible line used as part of a fall protection system to connect a worker or connecting device to an anchor or other component of the system.

Personal Fall Protection System - A system consisting of components such as an anchor, connecting device, and body support used to protect a worker from a fall.

Travel Restraint System – A system that limits a worker's movement so the worker cannot reach a location where a fall hazard exists.

5.0 Role and Responsibilities

5.1 Senior Leadership

Senior Leadership shall:

- Provide leadership and support for the implementation of this Program.
- Ensure appropriate resources are available to support this program.
- Promote compliance with applicable legislation, standards, and College requirements.

5.2 Managers and Supervisors

Managers and Supervisors shall:

- Ensure fall hazards are identified, and appropriate controls are implemented before work begins.
- Ensure fall protection responsibilities are assigned and supported within areas under their authority.
- Ensure workers performing work at heights have the required training, equipment, and information.
- Ensure fall protection equipment is inspected, maintained, and used in accordance with this Program and applicable manufacturer requirements.
- Address unsafe conditions and practices and take corrective action where required.
- Ensure incidents, equipment deficiencies, and other identified concerns are reported and addressed.

5.3 Workers

Workers shall:

- Follow this Program, applicable procedures, and training requirements.
- Use required fall protection equipment and controls as instructed and trained.
- Inspect fall protection equipment before use and report damaged, defective, or otherwise unsuitable equipment.
- Report fall hazards, unsafe conditions, and incidents to their Supervisor.
- Not modify, misuse, or bypass fall protection systems or equipment.

5.4 Occupational Health and Safety

The Occupational Health and Safety department shall:

- Provide guidance on the implementation and interpretation of this Program.
- Support departments in identifying and controlling fall hazards.
- Provide or coordinate applicable fall protection training and resources.
- Review the Program and recommend updates where legislative, regulatory, operational, or other changes require.

5.5 Joint Health and Safety Committee

The JOHSC shall:

- Participate in workplace inspections and investigations, where applicable.

- Identify and bring forward fall hazards and related concerns.
- Make recommendations regarding fall hazard prevention and control in accordance with its legislated functions.

5.6 Contractors

Contractors shall:

- Comply with applicable legislation and College fall protection requirements.
- Ensure their workers are appropriately trained and qualified for the work being performed.
- Provide and maintain required fall protection equipment and systems.
- Follow applicable College procedures and coordinate fall protection measures with the College where work activities may affect College workers or others.

6.0 General Program Requirements

6.1 Fall Hazard Assessment

Before work begins, fall hazards shall be identified and assessed. The assessment shall consider:

- The work location and potential fall hazards
- The method of access and egress
- The work being performed and the equipment being used
- Openings, unprotected edges, elevated surfaces, and other conditions that could result in a fall
- Hazards below or adjacent to the work area, including falling-object hazards
- Environmental or other conditions that may increase the risk of a fall

Appropriate controls shall be implemented before work begins. **Appendix A – Fall Protection Height and Hazard Quick Reference** provides additional guidance for identifying situations where fall protection requirements apply.

6.2 Fall Protection Measures

Fall hazards shall be controlled using appropriate measures based on the nature of the hazard and applicable legislative requirements.

Where practicable, measures that prevent a fall shall be used in preference to systems that arrest a fall.

For work subject to the Construction Projects Regulation, where a guardrail system is not practicable, the highest-ranked fall protection method that is practicable shall be used in accordance with applicable requirements.

Where fall prevention measures are not practicable or sufficient, an appropriate fall protection system shall be used.

Fall protection systems shall be selected based on the specific work activity, location, equipment, and hazards present.

6.3 Fall Protection Equipment

Fall protection equipment shall:

- Meet applicable legislative and recognized standards

- Be compatible with the other components of the system
- Be used in accordance with manufacturer requirements
- Be appropriate for the intended application
- Be inspected before use and removed from service if damaged, defective, or otherwise unsuitable
- Be maintained, stored, and cared for in accordance with manufacturer's requirements

Equipment that has arrested a fall shall be removed from service until it has been inspected and determined to be suitable for continued use in accordance with manufacturer's requirements.

6.4 Anchors and Connecting Components

Anchors and connecting components shall be suitable for the fall protection system and intended application.

Anchorage points and fixed supports shall meet applicable legislative, design, and manufacturer requirements and shall be capable of supporting the loads imposed by the fall protection system.

Workers shall not attach fall protection equipment to an anchor point unless its suitability for the intended application has been established.

Fall protection components shall be compatible and used in accordance with manufacturer requirements.

6.5 Working at Heights Equipment and Access

Ladders, elevated work platforms, scaffolds, and other equipment used to access elevated work areas shall be selected, inspected, maintained, and used in accordance with applicable legislation, manufacturer requirements, College procedures, and required training.

Detailed requirements for ladder use and operation are addressed through the College's *Ladder Safety Training*. Requirements for operating specific elevated work platforms or other equipment shall be addressed through applicable equipment procedures and training.

6.6 Falling Objects and Area Protection

Where work at height creates a risk of objects falling onto a person(s) below, appropriate controls shall be implemented.

Controls may include:

- Barricading or restricting access to the area below
- Securing tools, materials, and equipment
- Using appropriate protective equipment
- Establishing exclusion zones or other measures appropriate to the hazard.

6.7 Rescue and Emergency Planning

Where a fall arrest system is used, a rescue plan shall be established before work begins.

The rescue plan shall consider:

- The method and equipment required to safely retrieve a fallen worker
- Access to the worker and potential hazards during rescue
- Communication and emergency response requirements

- The availability of appropriate rescue equipment and trained personnel

Emergency services shall be contacted where required.

6.8 Prohibited Practices

Workers shall not:

- Use damaged or defective fall protection equipment
- Modify or alter fall protection equipment without manufacturer's authorization
- Use equipment outside its intended application
- Bypass, disconnect, or otherwise defeat a fall protection system
- Attach fall protection equipment to an anchor point that has not been established as suitable for the application

7.0 Training and Education

Workers who may be exposed to fall hazards shall receive training appropriate to the work being performed and the fall protection measures used.

Training shall include, as applicable:

- Recognition of fall hazards and required control measures
- Proper selection, use, inspection, and care of fall protection equipment
- Requirements and limitations of the fall protection systems being used
- Applicable emergency and rescue procedures
- Equipment-specific training where required.

Where Working at Heights training is required by applicable legislation, workers shall complete training through an approved training provider.

Workers shall receive additional training when there are significant changes to work activities, fall protection systems, equipment, or requirements, or where deficiencies indicate that retraining is necessary.

Note: Detailed ladder safety and equipment operation training is addressed through applicable College training and equipment-specific procedures and is not duplicated in this program.

8.0 Documentation

Documentation supports the implementation, administration, and continual improvement of this program. Records required under this program shall be created, maintained, retained, and disposed of in accordance with applicable legislation, College procedures, and record retention requirements.

Records may include:

- Fall hazard assessments or related planning documentation
- Fall protection equipment inspections and maintenance records
- Training records
- Equipment or system-specific procedures
- Rescue plans, where applicable

- Records of incidents, deficiencies, corrective actions, inspections, or reviews related to fall protection.

9.0 Program Review

This program shall be reviewed periodically to ensure it remains effective, current, and aligned with applicable legislation, recognized standards, College operations, and organizational objectives. Program reviews support the continual improvement of the College's Occupational Health and Safety Management System.

- This program shall be reviewed at intervals determined by the College, or more frequently where required by legislative, operational, or organizational changes.
- The program shall be reviewed following significant legislative or regulatory changes, changes to applicable standards, significant operational changes, or where incidents, investigations, inspections, audits, or other findings identify the need for revision.
- Program reviews shall consider opportunities to improve the effectiveness, clarity, and practical implementation of program requirements.

10.0 Appendices

Appendices provide supporting guidance, tools, templates, and reference material to assist with the implementation of this program. Appendices do not establish additional program requirements but are intended to support the consistent application of the requirements outlined in this document.

10.1 Appendix A – Fall Protection Height and Hazard Quick Reference

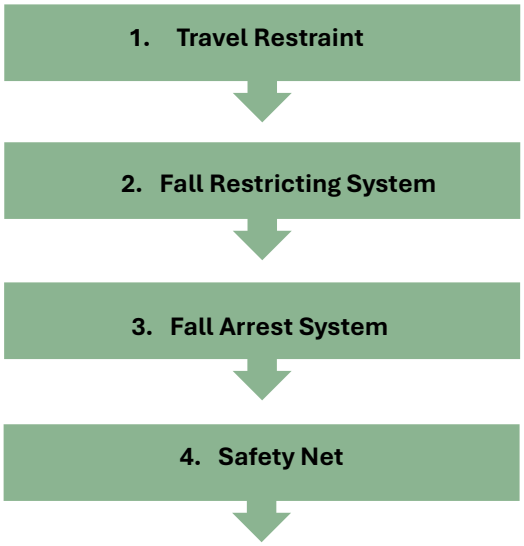
This appendix is a quick reference only. Fall protection requirements depend on the work activity, hazard, workplace, and applicable legislation. Where requirements differ, the applicable legislation takes precedence.

A1 – Quick Reference

Situation	Fall Protection Consideration
Fall hazard of 3m or less	Do not assume fall protection is unnecessary. Assess the specific hazard and implement appropriate controls. Certain legislative requirements apply below 3m.
Fall hazard of more than 3m – Construction Projects	Fall protection requirements apply. Where a guardrail is not practicable, the highest-ranked practicable fall protection method must be used.
Fall hazard of more than 1.2m	Fall protection requirements apply where the work area is used as a path for a wheelbarrow or similar equipment.
Fall hazard of 2.4m or more from certain work surfaces	Guardrail requirements may apply where a worker has access to the open side of a floor, mezzanine or balcony, bridge, roof while formwork is in place, scaffold or other work platform, or ramp.
Fall hazard; through an opening	Protection is required around openings in work surfaces. There is no minimum height threshold for this requirement. Guardrails or compliant protective coverings may be used, with appropriate protection when these are temporarily removed.
Fall hazard; into machinery, liquid, hazardous substance, or object.	Fall protection requirements may apply regardless of the height involved. Assess the hazard and implement appropriate controls.
Fall hazard of more than 3m – Industrial Establishments	Under O.Reg 851, s.85, where a worker is exposed to a fall hazard and the surface below is more than 3m below the worker, the specified fall-arrest requirements apply.
Other fall hazards	Height alone does not determine the required protection. Assess the task, work area, and consequences of a potential fall and implement appropriate controls.

A2 – Fall Protection Method – Construction Projects

For work subject to O. Reg. 213/91 where a guardrail system is not practicable, the highest-ranked practicable fall protection method shall be used.



A3 – Before Starting Work

Before work begins:

1. Identify the fall hazard
2. Determine which legislation applies to the work
3. Assess the specific work area and task
4. Select appropriate fall protection measures
5. Ensure required training and equipment are in place
6. Where fall arrest or a safety net is used, ensure required rescue procedures are established before work begins

Note: Height alone does **not** determine whether fall protection is required. When in doubt, consult Occupational Health and Safety before beginning the work.

10.2 Appendix B – Fall Protection Equipment Inspection Checklist

FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT INSPECTION CHECKLIST

This checklist supports the inspection of fall protection equipment before use. Equipment shall also be inspected, maintained, and removed from service in accordance with applicable requirements and manufacturer instructions.

Date:_____ **Equipment Type:**_____
Inspected By:_____ **Manufacturer/Model:**_____
Department/Work Area:_____ **Serial Number/Equipment ID:**_____

Inspection Item:	**Acceptable:**	**Deficiency:**
Webbing, straps, and stitching are free of cuts, fraying, burns, chemical damage, and excessive wear	☐	☐
Harnesses and body-support components show no signs of damage, deformation, or deterioration.	☐	☐
Buckles, d-rings, hooks, connectors, and other hardware are free of cracks, corrosion, deformation, and defects.	☐	☐
Connectors and locking mechanisms function correctly.	☐	☐
Lanyards, lifelines, and connecting components show no signs of damage or deterioration.	☐	☐
Self-retracting devices and other mechanical components operate as intended, where applicable.	☐	☐
Labels, markings, and identification information are present and legible.	☐	☐
Equipment is compatible with the intended fall protection system and application.	☐	☐
Equipment has no known history of arresting a fall or other events requiring removal from service.	☐	☐

Inspection Outcome: ☐ Acceptable for use ☐ Removed from service pending further assessment

Deficiencies/Comments: _____
_____
_____

Corrective Actions Taken: _____
_____
_____

Important Note: *Any equipment that is damaged, defective, unsuitable, or suspected of having arrested a fall shall be removed from service immediately. It shall not be returned to service unless assessed and deemed suitable in accordance with applicable requirements and manufacturer instructions.*

Inspector Signature:_____ **Date:** _____

10.3 Appendix C - Fall Rescue Planning Template

Purpose: This template supports rescue planning for work activities where a fall arrest system is used. A rescue plan shall be established before work begins and shall address the hazards, equipment, personnel, and procedures required to retrieve a fallen worker safely.

Work Information

Department/Contractor: _____

Work Location: _____

Description of Work: _____

_____

Dates/Times of Work: _____

Supervisor/Person(s) In Charge:_____

Fall Hazard and Protection

Fall Hazard Identified:_____

Fall Protection System Used:_____

Potential Fall Distance and Hazards Below:_____

_____

Access Restrictions or Other Site Hazards:_____

_____

Rescue Method:

Explain steps for retrieving a fallen or suspended worker: _____

_____

_____

Rescue Equipment Required: _____

Location of Equipment:_____

Trained Rescue Personnel Assigned:_____

Backup Rescue Method, where applicable:_____

_____

Emergency Communication:

Means of Communication:_____

Person Responsible for Recue Initiation:_____

Emergency Contact Arrangements:_____

Emergency Services Access/Location Instructions:_____

_____

Continued on pg. 15.

Rescue Considerations:

Confirm the following has been addressed:

- ☐ Rescue can be initiated promptly;
- ☐ Rescue equipment is available and suitable for the planned method;
- ☐ Assigned personnel are trained and competent to carry out the rescue;
- ☐ Access to the fallen worker and hazards to rescuers have been assessed;
- ☐ Communication arrangements and emergency contacts are established;
- ☐ The plan addresses the risk of suspension-related injury and the need for prompt retrieval and medical assessment.

Review Before Work Begins:

The rescue plan has been reviewed with the workers involved, and the required personnel, equipment, and communication arrangements are in place. All workers and supervisors must sign and date this document.

Signature of Supervisor/Person(s) In Charge:_____**Date:**_____

Signature of Supervisor/Person(s) In Charge:_____**Date:**_____

Signature of Worker(s):_____**Date:**_____

Signature of Worker(s):_____**Date:**_____