

# Fall Prevention & Protection

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SAFETY POLICY MANUAL - SECTION 1 - POLICY NO. SM 1.5



SAFETY DEPARTMENT | 6001 UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD MOON TOWNSHIP, PA 15108

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**I. PURPOSE:**

- A. The purpose of the written program is to define the safety system utilized at Robert Morris University to prevent falls from elevated work surfaces.

**II. SCOPE & APPLICABILITY:**

- A. This program applies to all affected RMU personnel. Affected personnel are those employees who work at unprotected heights greater than six (6) feet.

**III. REFERENCES**

- A. OSHA Standard 29 CFR, Part 1926, Subpart M.
- B. OSHA Standard 29 CFR, Part 1910, Subpart D

**IV. DEFINITIONS:**

- A. **AFFECTED PERSONNEL**-Those RMU personnel whose normal job assignments require them to sometimes work at unprotected heights greater than six (6) feet.
- B. **ANCHORAGE POINT** - A secure point of attachment for retractable lifelines, lanyards, or deceleration devices. Anchorages use for attachment of personal fall arrest equipment shall be independent of any anchorage used to support or suspend platforms and capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds per employee.
- C. **BODY HARNESS** - A set of straps that may be secured about an Individual in a manner that will distribute the fall arrest forces over at least the thighs, pelvis, waist, chest and shoulders with means for attaching it to other components of a personal fall arrest system.
- D. **CONNECTOR**- A device which is used to connect different components of a personal fall arrest system.
- E. **DEPARTMENT HEADS** - Any RMU line manager including but not limited to Supervisors, Managers, Directors, and Vice Presidents.
- F. **LANYARD** - A flexible nylon strap which generally has a connector at each end for connecting the body harness to an anchorage point or a retractable lifeline.
- G. **PERSONAL FALL ARREST SYSTEM** - A system use to arrest an employee when free falling from an elevated work surface. It consists of an anchorage point, connectors, a body harness, and may include a lanyard or retractable lifeline.
- H. **RETRACTABLE LIFELINE**- A fall arrest device which automatically limits free fall distance to 2 feet or less and capable of sustaining a minimum tensile load of 3,000 pounds with the lifeline or lanyard in the fully extended position.

**V. PROCEDURE:****A. GENERAL**

1. The following fall prevention and protection engineering controls and protective measures shall be implemented whenever feasible however, if they have not been installed or they do not provide adequate protection to prevent a fall then a personal fall arrest system shall be implemented in accordance with Section V.B of this policy.
2. Standard guardrails shall be provided along the exposed sides of platforms where the fall potential is 4 feet or more or where the Individual could fall into moving equipment, corrosive chemicals or a impalement hazard. The standard railing shall be 42 inches high with a 21- inch midrail and a 4 Inch toeboard located within ¼ Inch of the platform surface.
3. A standard railing shall guard the open sides of any steps that have 4 or more risers. The railing shall be between 30 and 34 inches In height measured from the leading edge of the tread.
4. Floor Openings of 12 Inches or greater shall be covered or a standard guardrail system shall be installed. When selecting a method to protect the opening care shall be taken to ensure an additional hazard is not created.
5. All skylights shall be protected by standard railing or marked by an appropriate warning line.
6. All fixed ladders with a fall potential of 20 feet or more shall be protected with a ladder cage.

**B. FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT**

1. In general, a personal fall arrest system consisting of an anchorage point, connectors, a body harness, and/or a lanyard or retractable lifeline shall be utilized when working at unprotected heights greater than 6 feet.
2. Personal fall arrest system including connectors, rings, hooks, lifelines, lanyards, harnesses and similar equipment must meet the criteria noted In OSHA 29CFR 1926.502(d).
3. All components of the personal fall arrest system shall be capable of supporting a minimum dead weight of 5,000 lbs per employee attached.
4. When using a fall arrest system, the set-up must be made to ensure an employee can never free fall more than six (6) feet nor contact any level below.
5. When utilizing a fall arrest system, the employee must utilize a system that provides continuous tie-off.
6. When vertical lifelines are used, each employee shall be attached to a separate lifeline.

7. A personal fall arrest system shall never be attached to a guardrail unless the system has been approved as an acceptable anchorage point capable of supporting the required load and approved by Facilities Management.
8. Work being performed on roofs must meet all the criteria noted in OSHA 29CFR 1910.28(b)(13)

**C. OBTAINING AND STORING FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT**

1. Fall protection equipment is maintained by the Facilities Management Department.
2. Upon completion of work, fall protection equipment users shall return the equipment to one of the designated storage areas identified in the preceding step of this policy.

**D. INSPECTION OF FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS & EQUIPMENT**

1. Users of fall protection systems and equipment shall inspect all equipment and components prior to each use.
2. Facilities Management shall inspect all fall protection systems on an annual basis.
3. All defective equipment shall be removed from service immediately and either discarded or repaired.

**E. PLAN FOR RESCUE:**

1. All work requiring the use of fall protection equipment and/or arrest system must be done using the buddy system. An attendant (competent person) will stand by in the event of an emergency.
2. Work will not be completed until proper rescue procedures are identified.
3. In the event that an emergency requires outside assistance, RMU Police will be contacted immediately. RMU Police will summon local emergency services (911).

**VI. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**A. DEPARTMENT HEADS:**

1. Monitor employee work practices to ensure they are in compliance with the requirements contained In this policy.

**B. EMPLOYEES:**

1. All affected RMU personnel must follow the fall prevention and protection work practices contained In this policy.
2. Affected persons shall attend the specialized training sessions on this subject that have been designed specifically for them.

**C. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY:**

1. Routinely monitors RMU facilities and activities for compliance with this policy.



2. Assists departments with fall prevention and protection training in accordance with the requirements contained in Section VII of this policy.

**VII. TRAINING & EDUCATION:**

- A. Affected persons shall be trained in the following prior to performing a job assignment that requires them to utilize fall protection systems and equipment.
  1. Recognition of applicable fall hazards associated with the work to be completed;
  2. When fall protection system and equipment use is mandatory In accordance with the requirements of the policy;
  3. The different types of fall protection systems and equipment;
  4. The use of a full body harness;
  5. The purpose, function, proper use, and limitations of fall protection systems and equipment;
  6. Load determinations and balancing requirements;
  7. How and where to obtain the necessary equipment; and
  8. Procedures for inspecting as well as removing defective fall-protection systems and equipment from service.

**VIII. QUALITY CONTROL:**

- A. Safety Services and the Safety Committee reviews employee Injury statistics and analyzes the data for trends or events that could have been prevented if fall prevention and protection, engineering controls and safe word practices were being utilized In accordance with this policy.

**IX. DOCUMENTATION & RECORD KEEPING:**

- A. Facilities Management shall maintain copies of fall prevention and protection training records for those affected employees for a period of 5 years.

**X. REVIEW FREQUENCY/INTERPRETATION & CHANGES:**

- A. This policy will be reviewed as determined necessary.
- B. All requests for interpretations of and changes to this policy shall be directed to Safety Services.



**Implementation Date:** March, 2007

**Safety Committee Last Reviewed/Revised:** March 2026