

Steel Erection and Fifteen Feet

About 9 minutes to deliver

A different trigger height, two narrow exceptions people misuse, and the reason nobody walks a beam without knowing which one applies.

Steel erection has its own subpart and its own trigger height, and mixing it up with the general construction rule is how people end up unprotected legally and dead practically.

FIFTEEN FEET, NOT SIX

1926.760(a)(1): each employee in a steel erection activity on a walking/working surface with an unprotected side or edge more than 15 feet above a lower level shall be protected by guardrails, safety nets, personal fall arrest, positioning device systems or fall restraint.

On multi-storey structures, perimeter safety cables go in at the final interior and exterior perimeters of floors as soon as the decking is installed.

THE TWO EXCEPTIONS, AND WHAT THEY ARE NOT

Both are narrow, and both get stretched.

- Connectors — between 15 and 30 feet, or two storeys, whichever is less, a connector must be protected from fall hazards or wear the equipment necessary to be able to be tied off and be provided a point to tie to. Above 30 feet or two storeys, ordinary fall protection applies. A connector is somebody placing and connecting structural members, not everybody who happens to be up there.
- Controlled decking zone (CDZ) — deckers between 15 and 30 feet may work without fall protection inside a properly established CDZ. That means the zone is defined and marked with control lines, no more than 90 feet wide and 90 feet from the leading edge, access limited to those doing the decking, and every person in it specifically trained for it under 1926.761.

Neither exception is a general permission to work at height untied because the job is steel.

DECKING

1926.754(e) covers the part that kills people who are not ironworkers: openings and unsecured deck.

- Deck gets laid tight and secured as it goes, not stacked and secured later.
- Never step on a bundle of deck or an unsecured sheet. A loose sheet slides, and there is nothing under it.
- Roof and floor openings get covered, secured and marked immediately — the same 1926.502(i) rules as everywhere else, and on steel there are a great many of them.
- Watch for the hole under the deck sheet somebody laid across it.

LANDING AND RIGGING

- No load released until it is secured with at least two bolts per connection, drawn up wrench-tight, or the equivalent — 1926.756(a)(1).
- Nobody under a load being landed, and nobody riding the load or the hook.
- Shear studs are not installed on the deck before it is welded down and not in an area people are walking — 1926.754(c) exists because a field of studs is a field of spikes.

EVERY DAY

Wind, frost, dew and paint on steel change the surface completely. Ice on a beam is a different beam. And nobody starts erecting until the concrete in the footings and piers has cured enough — 1926.752(a) requires written confirmation from the controlling contractor before steel goes up.

ASK THE CREW

- Who is a connector today, and who is just working up there?
- Is there a controlled decking zone, and is everybody in it trained for it?
- Is there unsecured deck or an uncovered opening anywhere right now?

29 CFR 1926.760 · 29 CFR 1926.754 · 29 CFR 1926.759

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

Steel Erection and Fifteen Feet

About 9 minutes to deliver · 29 CFR 1926.760 · 29 CFR 1926.754 · 29 CFR 1926.759

Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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