

SAFETY MATTERS CONSTRUCTION SERIES



Safety Net Systems

Where workers on a construction site are exposed to vertical drops of 6 feet or more, OSHA requires that employers provide fall protection in one of three ways *before* work begins:

- Placing guardrails around the hazard area.
- Deploying safety nets.
- Providing personal fall arrest systems for each employee.

Provisions for Safety Net Systems

- Safety nets must be installed as close as practicable under the surface on which employees are working, but in no case more than 30 feet below.
- When nets are used on bridges, the potential fall area must be unobstructed.
- Safety nets must extend outward from the outermost projection of the work surface as follows:

Vertical distance from working level to horizontal plane of net	Minimum required horizontal distance of outer edge of net from edge of the working surface
Up to 5 feet	8 feet
5 to 10 feet	10 feet
More than 10 feet	13 feet

- The most recent certification record for each net and net installation must be available at the jobsite for inspection.
- Safety nets must be inspected for wear, damage and other deterioration at least once a week, and after any occurrence which could affect the integrity of the system.
- Objects which have fallen into the safety net, such as scrap pieces, equipment and tools, must be removed as soon as possible from the net and at least before the next work shift.
- Maximum mesh size must not exceed 6 inches by 6 inches. All mesh crossings must be secured to prevent enlargement of the mesh opening, which must be no longer than 6 inches, measured center-to-center.
- Each safety net, or section thereof, must have a border rope for webbing with a minimum breaking strength of 5,000 pounds.
- Connections between safety net panels must be as strong as integral net components, and must not be spaced more than 6 inches apart.

Safety Matters Construction Series information is extracted directly from OSHA safety materials. For additional information consult www.OSHA.gov