

REBAR PROTECTION

Because impalement is so serious and often catastrophic, or deadly, it's important that all crew members understand and follow all safety guidelines that pertain to working with rebar and preventing impalement hazards.

OSHA Standard 1926.701(b) *All protruding reinforcing steel, onto and into which employees could fall, shall be guarded to eliminate the hazard of impalement.*

- When employees are working at any height above exposed rebar, fall protection and/or fall prevention needs to be in place.
- Guarding on rebar impalement hazards must be done when workers will be working around or at any height above exposed rebar, including work situations where the rebar is below grade or in a basement.
- Plastic mushroom caps that are not reinforced with steel are not adequate enough to protect against impalement.
- All workers should be able to recognize when rebar becomes a hazard.
- Rebar of any length, any diameter, and any direction must be guarded when there is the hazard that a worker could fall onto the bar and be impaled.
- Rebar caps that are designed to prevent impalement are typically larger than mushroom caps, square in shape, and fabricated with steel inside that prevents the rebar dowel from penetrating the protective cover.



OSHA states that protective devices capable of withstanding at least 250 pounds dropped from a height of ten feet will eliminate the hazard of impalement in most cases. However, as long as a protective device guards protruding rebar enough to eliminate the hazard of impalement, it satisfies the requirements of the standard.

- If the rebar caps being used on site are too narrow, not steel-reinforced, or do not meet OSHA's requirements for protection, the caps will not protect workers from impalement. If a worker falls on rebar with these ineffective caps the impact pressure can still cause a deadly impalement.

Discussion

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What other job site hazards may pose an impalement hazard?

Besides rebar caps, have you used any other products designed to prevent impalement?