

Theatre Safety

Fall Protection – Catwalk Safety

Catwalks are walkways that provide access to technical and service areas located above the stage or auditorium. They may also provide a bridge linking fly-floors. These elevated work surfaces pose fall hazards. Falls from the catwalks can result in serious debilitating injuries and death.

Catwalk Requirements

- 1. All catwalks and raised work platforms must be covered with a nonskid surface constructed from nonskid grating.
- 2. All catwalks and raised platforms must have toeboards at least 3 ¼ inches tall along all open sides.
- 3. Guardrails must be between 42 and 45 inches high.
- 4. Guardrails must be outfitted with midrails screens, vertical panels or another type of barrier between the platform and top rail.
- 5. Guardrails must be able to withstand a force of up to 200 pounds dropped downward or outward within 2 inches of the top rail.
- 6. When a force of up to 200 pounds is applied to the top rail, it must not deflect to a height lower than 39 inches above the platform.
- 7. Guardrails must have smooth surfaces.
- 8. Vertical panels, meshes and other intermediate barriers must be able to withstand a force of up to 150 pounds applied downward or outward.
- 9. Top and midrails must be at least one-quarter inch in diameter.

Guidelines

- 1. Only trained and authorized persons may access and work on or from the catwalk.
- 2. Bump hats with chin straps are required to be worn on the catwalk.
- 3. Remove all loose items from your pockets prior to ascending to the catwalk.
- 4. Tie-off or otherwise attach all tools to your person prior to ascending the catwalk.
- 5. Use a fall protection system when the work requires you to lean over or through the catwalk guardrails to access the equipment on which you are working.
 - a. Inspect all components of the fall protection system prior to each use.
 - b. Wear a full body harness that has the D-ring attachment at the back.
 - c. Ensure the lanyard is attached to an anchoring point that is capable of supporting 5,000 pounds.
 - d. Choose an anchor point that is close to and behind you.



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- e. Ensure all connections are secure, and the connections closed and locked.
- f. Never allow the lanyard to cross the front of your body or wrap around your arm or leg.
- 6. Ensure personnel have been removed from the area beneath you prior to adjusting equipment that extends over the catwalk guardrails.
- 7. Never use wooden planks, bars, ladders, or other devices to increase your height above the floor of the catwalk.
- 8. Never leave loose tools or materials on the catwalk.
- 9. Ensure adequate lighting is available on the catwalk. Use a flashlight if necessary.
- 10. Never participate in horseplay on the catwalks. Never throw items from the catwalk to the surface below.
- 11. Never remove the catwalk rails unless secured with the appropriate fall protection equipment that is properly installed.
- 12. Always replace catwalk rails after removal to load items onto the catwalk.
- 13. Conduct routine inspections and immediately report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor.