

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.