

## FIRE FIGHTERS GUIDANCE NOTE # 6-29

### ISSUE:    PREVENTION OF FALLS FROM FIRE APPARATUS

Falls from fire apparatus can result in firefighters sustaining serious injuries. Employers should establish procedures to protect firefighters from the hazard of falls.

Under Clause 25(2)(h) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA), employers have a duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker. The OHSA also requires the employer to provide information, instruction, and supervision to a worker to protect their health or safety (Clause 25(2)(a)).

Employers should refer to the standards listed below for guidance with respect to walking/stepping/standing/ climbing surfaces, guards, and handrails/handholds for the particular classification of fire apparatus, that are/were in effect at the time that the apparatus is specified, purchased, modified and/or refurbished. In addition, Subsection 7(3) of the Firefighters – Protective Equipment regulation requires employers to equip fire trucks with sufficient anti-slip handle-holds to allow firefighters to use the position known as the three-point contact method when entering or exiting the cab.

Employers should conduct a risk assessment of fire apparatus in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety Representative and develop procedures specific to each fire apparatus to prevent falls from the apparatus while performing the normal job functions.

Fire apparatus should not be used as observation platforms unless specifically designed for that purpose.

Recommended methods of risk elimination include ground level hose loading or other means to prevent the possibility of falls. New fire apparatus may have engineered design features that provide retractable railings or folding hose bed covers that fold to the outside edge to provide a barrier. For existing fire apparatus without such features, the following guidance is offered.

Where work is required to be performed on top of the fire apparatus:

- Minimize the number of personnel required on top of the fire apparatus to accomplish the task assigned;
- Where personnel are working on top of the fire apparatus, a second person should stand at grade level and monitor the personnel working on top;

- All personnel should work from the centre of the fire apparatus facing the outside of the fire apparatus when loading hose;
- Caution should be exercised where the top of the fire apparatus is slippery (i.e. snow or ice on top) which could result in a loss of footing;
- Personnel should use the three point contact method of mounting/dismounting apparatus.

**Note:** When in fire stations, reference the requirements of Section 85 of the Regulations for Industrial Establishments where workers are exposed to the hazard of falling more than three metres. In addition, all personnel working on hose beds in the fire station should be made aware of fans, heaters, and other potential overhead hazards.

References:

OHSA, Clauses 25(2)(a) and (h)  
Regulations for Industrial Establishments, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 851, Section 85  
O. Reg. 714/94 Firefighters – Protective Equipment regulation made under the OHSA  
NFPA 1901 Standard for Automotive Fire Apparatus  
NFPA 1912 Standard for Fire Apparatus Refurbishing  
CAN/ULC-S515 Standard for Automobile Fire Fighting Apparatus