**Falling Objects Safety Toolbox meeting topic!**

Falling objects from above cause serious injuries and account for fatalities every year. Falling object accidents occur due to a lack of communication, improper storage of materials, improper protection of elevated storage areas, when loads are being moved or secured improperly, when protective head gear is not worn, and improper housekeeping.

In the past few years there have been several deaths and serious injuries around the country at various places of employment from objects falling on workers:

* In TX an employee was seriously injured when a 2,000 lb. container fell on him
* In CA an employee was killed when a crate fell from a forklift
* In OH an employee’s arm was crushed when a large piece of steel fell on him

Each of these stories from the news show us dramatically the danger in falling objects at work. As you head out to work today, look around the facility for falling object hazards.

* + Are pallets stacked appropriately?
  + Are there any stacked loads leaning, ready to topple over?
  + Are you walking under a lift?
  + Are there objects on upper level that could fall off?
  + Are you near a hoisted object?
  + Are there tools unsecured and laying on elevated platforms?

***Causes of Falling Object Injuries***

* Inadequate signage warning about work going on overhead
* Dropped hand tools and equipment being used on a higher level
* Loose boxes or other objects that get displaced and fall off from stacked merchandise overhead
* Falling objects dropped by workers at a higher level
* Loads being lifted or carried overhead may not be secured properly, leading to objects getting dislodged and falling
* Housekeeping practices not followed creating hazard in elevated locations that cause objects to drop and potentially injure people

### *Prevention of Accidents from Falling Objects*

* Any loads that must be lifted to a high position must be secured properly with strong restraints to prevent them from falling
* Workers must be discouraged from lifting loads or lowering them over other workers’ heads
* Use barricades, signs, and caution tape to prevent workers from entering the areas where loads are being lifted and lowered. Also when possible verbally warn fellow employees to the dangers of entering lift areas
* All precautions must be taken to prevent materials from falling from a platform while they are being stacked
* Practice good housekeeping by keeping tools and other materials away from edges and off of railings or sills
* Don’t try to catch falling objects; let them fall, unless it will injury those below.

It is the responsibility of every person at work to ensure the safety of themselves and those around them. Take a moment and look for these types of hazards and correct them before you or a coworker gets hurt.