Dropped Object Prevention Program

SafetyFluent | Free employer template | SF-DOP-001 | Version 1.0

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Prevent the drop. Protect everyone below.

A dropped object is a tool, component, material or other item that falls from its intended position. Gravity, vibration, wind, contact, equipment movement and failed securing can create a hazard even when nobody is actively handling the item. This program addresses both loose items and equipment installed at height.

Complete and approve before use

This is a customizable employer program, not an OSHA-issued document, certification or assurance of compliance. The employer must assess actual tasks, select applicable requirements, complete the forms, provide equipment and training, and authorize implementation. ANSI/ISEA 121 is an equipment standard, not government approval of this program.

Employer / project _____

Site address / work areas _____

Program administrator / contact _____

Site supervisor / contact _____

Effective date / next review _____

Approved by / signature / date _____

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1. Scope and regulatory basis

The employer determines whether a task is construction, maintenance or another covered activity. Identify applicable federal OSHA, state-plan, local, owner and contract requirements before work. A person-fall height threshold is not permission to ignore falling objects below that height.

Authority	Application
29 CFR 1926.501(c), 1926.502(j)	Construction: head protection plus an applicable falling-object control. The selected protection must meet the relevant criteria.
29 CFR 1910.28(c), 1910.29(k)	General industry: head protection and appropriate prevention, canopy or exclusion measures; criteria for the protection used.
29 CFR 1926.451(h)	Scaffolds: specific falling-object provisions; do not substitute the general construction rules for this section.
29 CFR 1926.759	Steel erection: secure loose items aloft; controlling contractor addresses unauthorized entry below erection work.
29 CFR 1926.1425	Covered crane/derrick work: minimize exposure to loads and apply task-specific fall-zone restrictions.
29 CFR 1926.250, 1926.252	Construction storage and debris handling. Apply the specific distance, chute and barricade requirements when relevant.
ANSI/ISEA 121-2023	Design, performance and labeling of tool tethers, tool/anchor attachments and containers. Verify the applicable edition and published errata before procurement.

OSHA regulations and voluntary consensus standards have different legal roles. ANSI/ISEA 121 is not a blanket federal OSHA mandate to tether every object. It can support equipment selection; contracts or other applicable requirements may make particular standards binding. Full conformity claims require appropriate manufacturer evidence and the full standard, not this summary.

The procedures and review frequencies below are proposed employer rules unless a specific regulation is identified. This document is not a substitute for an engineered lift plan, personal fall-protection plan or equipment instructions. Sources are linked on page 14.

2. Responsibility and planning

Role	Required action under this employer program
Employer / administrator	Fund controls; appoint responsible people; coordinate contractors; approve the site plan and maintain records.
Site supervisor	Assess work above and below; establish the exclusion area; verify controls before release; stop and reassess changed conditions.
Competent / qualified support	Use personnel meeting the applicable rule for the particular task. Obtain engineering or manufacturer review for uncertain anchors, structural loads, canopies or other design questions. Titles alone do not establish competence.
Workers	Inspect and secure tools, use approved systems, account for items, respect barriers and report defects, drops and near misses. Everyone may stop unsafe work.
Ground coordinator / contractors	Control access, coordinate simultaneous operations, communicate with the elevated crew and preserve emergency routes.

Before each task: complete Form A

• List tools, batteries, sockets, fasteners, removed parts, debris and fixed equipment that could fall. Record work height, object weight/shape, travel path and people or property below.

• Assess wind, weather, vibration, corrosion, dropped or snagged rigging, fragile surfaces, roof hatches, grating, ledges and public access. Include intermediate levels and adjacent work.

• Eliminate overhead exposure where possible: preassemble at ground level, reduce loose parts and schedule conflicting work separately. Then select containment, securing and access controls.

• Define the exclusion area using credible trajectories, rebound, deflection, wind and movement. Do not use an arbitrary universal radius or a simple height multiplier as proof of safety.

• Stop if the area cannot be controlled, component ratings are unknown or the agreed controls are unavailable. Record changes and obtain supervisor release before restart.

3. Physical protection and exclusion

Prevent objects leaving the work area

Select toeboards, screening, covers, containment, retention or other suitable controls for the actual items. Ordinary open guardrails may stop a person but allow a small object through. Keep hatches and floor openings protected; plan controlled access when materials must pass through.

Construction criteria - 1926.502(j): toeboards used for falling-object protection are at least 3.5 inches high, with no more than 0.25 inch clearance and openings no larger than 1 inch. They must resist at least 50 pounds in the specified directions. Add screening when stored items rise above them; rail openings must prevent passage of potential falling items. A canopy must resist penetration and collapse. During roofing work, keep materials/equipment at least 6 feet from the edge unless edge guardrails are installed; stacks near the edge must be stable.

General industry - 1910.29(k): apply its separate toeboard, screening and canopy criteria, including the specific service-pit provision where applicable. Do not assume construction details cover every general-industry situation.

Control the area below

• Mark the approved boundary with suitable barriers and clear signs. Identify access points and a responsible ground coordinator where needed. Signs alone do not physically prevent entry.

• Account for entrances, sidewalks, parked vehicles, occupied rooms, lower work decks and emergency exits. Arrange an alternate protected route before closing an access path.

• Coordinate overlapping crews and suspended-load routes. Stop overhead work if anyone enters the exclusion area or communication is lost; clear and recheck before restarting.

• Use canopies or debris nets only when selected and installed for the expected objects, loads, openings and environment. A personnel safety net is not automatically a debris-containment system.

• Provide suitable head protection wherever required; it supplements the prevention system and does not make standing beneath a load safe.

4. Tools, attachments and containers

Use manufacturer-approved combinations appropriate to the work. Procure dropped-object prevention equipment with documented ratings and conformity information where ANSI/ISEA 121 is specified. A product label does not approve an improvised assembly or an unsuitable anchor.

Check the entire connection chain

• Identify the tool including batteries, sockets and accessories. Verify the rated capacity of each tool attachment, tether, connector, anchor attachment and container against the actual configuration and manufacturer limits.

• Use a tool attachment designed for that tool and installation method. Do not drill, weld, tape or modify a tool to create an anchor unless the manufacturer specifically permits the method.

• Select an approved tool anchor and attachment location. Confirm whether body attachment is allowed for that tool and weight; heavy tools or restrictive loads may require a suitable structure. Never attach to a person by default.

• Keep tethers as short as practicable within their design limits. Evaluate swing, snagging, rotating equipment, sharp edges, hot work and electrical exposure. Do not introduce an entanglement or shock hazard.

• Secure removable batteries and accessories using approved retention or containment. Close containers before movement; verify their load and closure ratings and whether they are permitted for hoisting.

• For transfers, establish the receiving connection before releasing the original where the approved system allows continuous retention; otherwise use a protected transfer/containment procedure. Do not release a tool over exposed people.

Do not confuse different systems

Tool tethers are not personal fall-arrest equipment or lifting slings. Do not use personal fall-arrest connections for tools unless the equipment manufacturer expressly permits that connection and configuration. Transport materials using rated lifting equipment and an approved lift plan, not an ordinary tool lanyard.

Unknown capacity, an illegible label, incompatible connectors or missing installation instructions means hold the item out of service until resolved. Never field drop-test a tether as an improvised inspection.

5. Work methods and special tasks

Tower, rooftop and elevated-platform work

• Before ascent, inventory tools and loose parts. Use secured, closable carriers; check helmet/accessory retention under the applicable manufacturer instructions. Do not carry unsecured items in hands while climbing.

• For antenna or structural-component removal, support the item before releasing its final fastener. Control bolts, nuts, cut-offs and packaging in suitable containers; account for removed and installed parts.

• For capstan, gin-pole or crane work, use the equipment-specific lifting plan and rated rigging. Check attachment security and loose parts on the load; tool-retention equipment does not replace load rigging.

• Before moving a lift/platform or changing work position, secure tools and containers and reassess the area below. Follow the platform manufacturer rules and applicable access/fall-protection requirements.

• Inspect installed lights, brackets, panels and other items exposed to vibration or corrosion. Use specified fasteners, locking methods and any engineered secondary retention; do not improvise wire or rope attachments.

Storage, scaffolds and debris

In buildings under construction, 1926.250(b)(1) specifies storage setbacks of 6 feet from hoistways/inside floor openings and 10 feet from an exterior wall that does not extend above stored material. Keep loads within floor limits and stack/secure them against movement. Other task-specific setbacks may also apply.

For scaffold work, follow 1926.451(h): use appropriate barriers, screening, containment or protective structures in addition to hard hats. Items too large or heavy for the selected protection must be kept away from edges and secured as needed.

Plan debris removal under 1926.252. Exterior drops over 20 feet require an enclosed chute; unchuted floor-opening disposal has specific barricade and signage requirements. Keep people out of the receiving area during overhead handling. This program prohibits uncontrolled throwing of tools or waste.

For cranes/derricks covered by Subpart CC, follow 1926.1425 and the lift plan. Only the workers permitted by the applicable provision may enter a load fall zone; this template does not create permission to stand under suspended loads.

6. Inspections and training

Inspection schedule adopted by the employer

When	What to verify
Before each use / shift	Tool attachment, tether, connector closure, label, wear, cuts, stitching, corrosion, container closure, anchor and security of fixed items. Use Forms B and C.
After an event or change	Stop and quarantine affected equipment after a drop arrest, impact, overload, damage, alteration or suspected defect. Inspect the wider system and adjacent work.
Periodic documented inspection	Set interval from manufacturer instructions, environment, use and risk. Record it in Form C. Do not invent a universal monthly or annual OSHA interval for all tool tethers.
Program review	Under this proposed company rule, review at least annually and after incidents, new equipment, work changes or identified deficiencies.

Remove failed items from service, label them, isolate them against reuse and record disposition. Repair or return to service only as allowed by the manufacturer and authorized review. Keep inspection records linked to an equipment ID.

Training before assignment

• Explain site hazards, exclusion zones, coordination, stop-work authority and reporting in a language and vocabulary workers understand.

• Demonstrate inspection, attachment installation, capacity checks, connection/transfer, container use and safe removal of defective items. Have each worker demonstrate these actions using the actual equipment.

• Train on task-specific fall and material-handling controls. Apply 1926.503 where relevant, including its written training certification requirements; apply 1910.30 where relevant.

• Repeat instruction when equipment, tasks or procedures change, or demonstrated knowledge/use is inadequate. Record evaluator, worker, date, equipment and any retraining on Form E.

A downloaded program, online quiz or course certificate alone does not establish employer authorization or demonstrate practical competence for a particular task.

7. Response, records and implementation

Dropped object or near miss

• Stop the affected work and warn others. Keep people out of the drop area and secure remaining items from a safe position. Do not attempt to catch a falling object.

• For injury or immediate danger, activate the site emergency response and call emergency services as appropriate. Avoid a secondary exposure during rescue or retrieval.

• Notify the supervisor and preserve relevant equipment, photographs and witness information. Record a caught drop or damaged retention system even if nobody was hurt.

• Investigate causes including attachment selection, installation, handling, environment and coordination. Assign corrective actions and verify their effectiveness.

• Supervisor authorizes restart only after the hazard is controlled and affected workers are briefed. Follow applicable injury-reporting, recordkeeping and client-notification duties separately.

Record ownership and retention

Keep the approved program and revisions, task assessments, equipment instructions, inspection/disposition records, training and incident actions accessible to responsible staff. Name a custodian, storage location and retention schedule below. This template does not prescribe a universal OSHA retention period; apply the specific record type, jurisdiction, contract and any legal hold. Restrict personal/medical information appropriately.

Record custodian / location _____

Retention schedule / basis _____

Emergency contact / site address _____

Restart authorization role _____

Launch checklist

Before adopting: complete the cover and Forms A-E; approve equipment and budgets; establish contractor coordination and emergency access; deliver practical instruction; confirm controls in the field; sign the program. Reassess whenever conditions change.

Contents: pages 1-8: program; 9: task assessment; 10: pre-work check; 11: inspection log; 12: incident/action report; 13: practical training record; 14: official references.

Form A. Task risk assessment

Project / location / date _____

Task / elevated work level _____

Supervisor / crew / other contractors _____

Item / task / height / weight	Who or what is exposed?	Controls / responsible person

Exclusion boundary and reason _____

Wind / weather / stop conditions _____

Protected access / emergency route _____

Tools / attachments / capacity evidence _____

Containment / barriers / structural review _____

Simultaneous work coordination _____

Communication / loss-of-contact action _____

Sketch the work area, travel paths, lower levels and exclusion boundary on an attached sheet. Attach any equipment-specific lift or engineering plan.

Unresolved hazards / action owner _____

Supervisor release / signature / time _____

Release rule: Do not start with unresolved hazards. Update this assessment after a change in scope, weather, equipment, personnel or access.

Form B. Pre-work and closeout check

Project / task / date _____

Inspector / supervisor _____

Check item	Yes / No / N/A
Task assessment reviewed; work above/below coordinated.	
Ground work or preassembly considered to eliminate exposure.	
Exclusion boundary established; public and emergency access addressed.	
Tools, detachable parts and fixed overhead items identified.	
Component capacities, compatibility and instructions verified.	
Attachments, tethers, connectors and containers inspected.	
Toeboards, screening, covers or canopies suitable and intact.	
Materials, debris and removed parts secured or contained.	
Head protection and other task PPE selected and inspected.	
Crew trained; communication and stop-work signal confirmed.	
Weather, snagging, electrical and rotating-equipment hazards controlled.	
End of task: tool/part inventory reconciled; waste removed.	
End of task: remaining elevated items secured and area released.	

A "No" requires correction before affected work starts or resumes. Explain every N/A. Attach an additional sheet if necessary.

Defect / correction / owner _____

N/A explanation _____

Supervisor authorization / time _____

Form C. Equipment inspection log

Project / employer _____

Inspector / inspection date _____

Inspection interval / basis _____

Record the entire tool-retention system, not just the lanyard. Keep manufacturer instructions and conformity evidence with the equipment register. Add pages as needed.

ID / item / model	Rated limit / compatible configuration	Condition / pass or fail	Action / next check

Inspect: labels and traceability; tool/anchor attachment; connectors; cuts and wear; stitching; corrosion; contamination; container and closure; evidence of impact or overload. Check specific manufacturer rejection criteria.

Quarantined IDs / location _____

Repair or disposal authority / result _____

Return-to-service approval / date _____

Do not return a failed or drop-loaded item to use merely because it looks intact. Follow manufacturer disposition requirements and document the decision.

Form D. Drop / near-miss report

Project / date / time _____

Reporter / contact _____

Object / weight / estimated fall height _____

Location / task / people exposed _____

Event type: [ ] Object fell [ ] Retention arrested a drop [ ] Loose item found [ ] Other

Injury / damage / emergency response _____

Immediate isolation / notifications _____

Describe sequence and contributing factors

Attach photos, witness information and equipment IDs. Preserve evidence safely. Do not include unnecessary medical details in general-access files.

Corrective action	Owner / due date	Verified by / date

Equipment quarantine / disposition _____

Crew rebrief / training required _____

Restart approved by / date / time _____

Follow-up effectiveness review _____

Supervisor evaluates any separately applicable OSHA reporting/recordkeeping and contractual duties. Completing this form alone does not satisfy those duties.

Form E. Practical instruction record

Employer / project / date _____

Worker name / role _____

Trainer / evaluator / role _____

Equipment models / task assessed _____

Use actual approved equipment in a controlled setting. Record Demonstrated, Needs practice, or N/A with reason. Do not perform an intentional drop to prove competence.

Worker demonstrates	Result / notes
Identifies overhead and lower-level hazards and sets a suitable exclusion area.	
Locates manufacturer limits and checks tool/attachment/tether/anchor compatibility.	
Inspects equipment and identifies rejection/quarantine conditions.	
Installs approved attachments and closes connectors correctly.	
Uses retention or containment during work and transfers without exposing people.	
Secures batteries, accessories, fasteners and containers.	
Explains stop-work, loss-of-communication and incident response.	
Completes tool/part inventory and safe closeout.	

Retraining / reassessment needed _____

Worker signature / date _____

Evaluator signature / date _____

Employer task authorization / limitations _____

This is a practical instruction record, not a professional credential. Keep any additional certification information required by an applicable OSHA training standard. Employer authorization is task- and equipment-specific.

Official references and revision notes

Reference review: November 2, 2026. Verify current requirements and equipment instructions before adoption. OSHA links below are primary regulatory sources. ANSI/ISEA and DROPS materials are separate industry resources; no endorsement is implied.

Construction falling-object duties - 1926.501(c)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.501

Construction protection criteria - 1926.502(j)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.502

General industry duties - 1910.28(c)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.28

General industry criteria - 1910.29(k)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.29

Scaffolds - 1926.451(h)
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.451

Steel erection - 1926.759
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.759

Cranes and derricks - 1926.1425
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.1425

Storage - 1926.250; debris - 1926.252
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.250

Debris disposal - 1926.252
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.252

Construction training - 1926.503
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1926/1926.503

General industry training - 1910.30
https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.30

ISEA: ANSI/ISEA 121-2023 overview and erratum
https://safetyequipment.org/worker_protections/dropped-objects-prevention/

DROPS: guidance and resources (industry best practice)
https://www.dropsonline.org/drops-guidance-and-resources/

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