SAFE

OSHA QUICK REFERENCE

Key Construction Standards Field Guide (29 CFR 1926)

Field Reference Purpose: This guide summarizes essential OSHA standards under Title 29 CFR Part 1926 for construction sites. It highlights critical compliance thresholds, equipment rules, and mandatory safety practices for field supervisors and safety personnel.

1. Fall Protection Systems & Thresholds

Subpart M — 29 CFR 1926.500-503

TOPIC / STANDARD	OSHA THRESHOLD	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
Trigger Height `1926.501(b)`	**6 feet (1.8 m)**	Fall protection required for all unprotected sides and edges 6 ft or higher above a lower level.
Guardrail Systems `1926.502(b)`	Top rail: 42" ± 3" Midrail: 21" height	• Top rail must withstand 200 lbs outward/downward force. • Midrail must withstand 150 lbs force. • Toeboards (3.5" high) required for overhead falling object protection.
Personal Fall Arrest (PFAS) `1926.502(d)`	5,000 lbs anchor or 2:1 safety factor	• Max free fall: 6 ft; max arresting force: 1,800 lbs. • D-ring centered on upper back; lanyards inspected prior to each use. • Prompt rescue plan required for fallen workers.
Holes & Openings `1926.501(b)(4)`	Holes 2" or larger	Covers must support 2x max intended load, secured, and marked "HOLE" or "COVER".

2. Scaffolding Requirements

Subpart L — 29 CFR 1926.451-454

TOPIC / STANDARD	KEY PARAMETER	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
Competent Person `1926.451(f)(3)`	Daily pre-shift inspection	Must inspect scaffold and components for visible defects before each work shift and after any event affecting structural integrity.
Capacity & Construction `1926.451(a)`	4x max intended load	• Platforms fully planked (gap ≤ 1"); min 18" platform width. • Planks extend 6" to 12" over supports unless cleated. • Baseplates and mudsills mandatory on soft/uneven ground.
Fall Protection on Scaffolds `1926.451(g)`	**10 feet (3.0 m)**	Fall protection (guardrail system or personal fall arrest) mandatory for workers on scaffolds 10 ft above a lower level.

3. Excavations & Trenching Safety

Subpart P — 29 CFR 1926.650-652

TOPIC / STANDARD	THRESHOLD / STANDARD	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
Protective Systems `1926.652(a)`	**5 feet (1.5 m) depth**	Trenched 5 ft or deeper require protective systems (sloping, benching, shoring, or trench shield/box) unless in solid rock.
Access & Egress `1926.651(c)(2)`	4 feet depth; 25 ft travel	Stairs, ramps, or ladders required in trenches ≥ 4 ft deep; ladder must extend 3 ft above top edge and be within 25 ft of all workers.
Spoil Piles & Equipment `1926.651(j)(2)`	2 feet set-back	Excavated materials/spoil piles and equipment kept at least 2 ft from trench edge to prevent roll-back/cave-ins.

4. Electrical Safety & Wiring

Subpart K — 29 CFR 1926.400-449

TOPIC / STANDARD	OSHA STANDARD	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
GFCI Protection `1926.404(b)(1)`	Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters	GFCI required on all 120V, single-phase 15A and 20A temporary receptacle outlets, OR implement Assured Equipment Grounding Conductor Program (AEGCP).
Cords & Cables `1926.405(a)(2)`	Hard / Extra-Hard Usage	• Flexible cords must be heavy-duty rated (S, SO, ST, SJ). • Inspect daily; remove damaged cords with frayed insulation or missing ground pins immediately. • Never run cords through doors, walls, or pinch points.
Power Line Clearance `1926.1408`	10 ft min clearance (≤ 50kV)	Maintain minimum 10 ft clearance from overhead power lines. Increase distance for voltages > 50kV.

5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Subpart E — 29 CFR 1926.95-106

EQUIPMENT TYPE	ANSI / STANDARD RULE	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
Head Protection `1926.100`	ANSI Z89.1	Hard hats required where falling object hazards, head bumps, or high-voltage electrical contacts exist.
Eye & Face Protection `1926.102`	ANSI Z87.1	Safety glasses with side shields mandatory; full face shields required for grinding, chipping, or handling corrosive chemicals.
Footwear `1926.96`	ASTM F2413 / ANSI Z41	Protective toe footwear required where crush, puncture, or falling object hazards exist.

6. Hazard Communication & Respirable Silica

Subpart Z — 29 CFR 1926.55/1153

TOPIC / STANDARD	STANDARD CODE	MANDATORY FIELD REQUIREMENTS
Hazard Communication `1926.59 / 1910.1200`	GHS / SDS Standard	• Maintain written HazCom program and site SDS binder/digital access. • Secondary containers must be labeled with GHS pictograms and hazard statements.
Respirable Silica `1926.1153`	Table 1 Engineering Controls	• PEL: 50 µg/m³ 8-hr TWA; Action Level: 25 µg/m³. • Implement Table 1 engineering controls (wet methods, vacuum dust collection) for concrete cutting, grinding, drilling. • Written exposure control plan and competent person required.

Top OSHA Construction Violations to Guard Against:

1. Fall Protection General Requirements (1926.501)
2. Scaffolding General Requirements (1926.451)
3. Ladders Access & Extension (1926.1053)
4. Fall Protection Training (1926.503)
5. Eye & Face Protection (1926.102)
6. Excavation Protection Systems (1926.652)