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OVERVIEW

Rebar, short for reinforcing bars, are steel rods used in concrete. Rebar often causes injuries because they jut out of concrete and can cause cuts, scrapes, falls, and even impalement. Therefore, when you work with rebar, remember these safety tips.

FALL PROTECTION

Probably the first injury that comes to mind when working with rebar is impalement. Rebar can cause a death or serious injury from an otherwise mild fall. Usually, the best protection against impalement from rebar is to protect against the fall in the first place.

Cal/OSHA's approved fall protection when working above grade can be either:

- Guardrails OR
- Approved Fall Protection Systems, such as:
 - Personal Fall Arrest System
 - Personal Fall Restraint System
 - your fall protection system prevents you from falling 6 feet from where you are working but the rebar juts out 8 feet from where you are working, the fall protection won't help.



SAFETY COVERS

If fall protection is impracticable, you should use protective covers on the rebar, according to Cal/OSHA.

- They must be made of wood, plastic, or other strong materials
- They must be at least 4 inches by 4 inches, or with a minimum diameter of 4 ½ inches
- Manufactured protective covers
 - must be able to withstand the impact of a 250 pound weight dropped from a height of 10 feet without penetration failure of the cover
- Covers built on the site:
 - Must be designed by a registered California engineer or set up according to Cal/OSHA diagrams



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MUSHROOM CAPS

Rebar caps, or mushroom caps, are only to be used for protection from scratches and cuts when you are working at the same level as the rebar. They fit over the tops of the rebar, and while they would not protect against impalement, they cover up the sharp edges to prevent scraping against the skin.



GENERAL SAFETY TIPS

Although impalement is the most obvious danger, there are other hazards to watch out for when dealing with rebar. Remember:

- Watch where you're going and be aware of your surroundings so you do not trip on the rebar
- Consider wearing work gloves when handling rebar so you do not scrape your hands
- Practice proper lifting techniques so you do not strain your back while transporting rebar
- Wear eye protection and gloves when you are bending rebar, and be very careful with the equipment

CONCLUSION

In the past 20 years, 61% of construction accidents were due to impalement from rebar. Therefore, remember to always use common sense, follow the Cal/OSHA regulations, and be careful when working around rebar.

