



# Balloon Framed Walls

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has identified problems in the practice of manually raising balloon framed walls. The walls may become too heavy for employees to hold and could collapse back onto the employees. Recent balloon framed wall collapses have been reported. In one of these accidents, eight employees were sent to local hospitals; two of them suffered broken feet and vertebrae. Six other employees suffered back, shoulder and neck strains.

Employers may use a combination of the following methods to protect employees from the potential collapse of balloon framed walls:

- Pre-plan the job.
  - Determine the weight of the walls.
  - Conduct “pre-lift” meetings to discuss the safest methods for raising these walls.
  - Use a competent person to consider and supervise all aspects of the lifting operation.
  - Use cranes with appropriate and approved attachments to assist in raising and placing balloon framed walls.
  - Use either forklifts of adequate size and capacity for lifting balloon framed walls or rough terrain forklifts with appropriate and approved attachments in placing balloon framed walls.
  - Prior to the lifting of the wall, establish a limited access zone whenever a balloon framed wall is being raised.
  - The limited access zone should be equal to the height of the wall plus four feet and should run the entire length of the wall.
  - The limited access zone should be restricted to entry by employees actively engaged in lifting the wall and no other workers be allowed to enter the zone.
  - The limited access zone should remain in place until the wall is adequately supported and braced to prevent accidental collapse.
- Secure bottom plates with adequate sized metal bands (at least a one-inch band nailed to the floor joists) located at each end of the wall and spaced not more than 6 feet apart or other adequate feasible means of securing the bottom plate.
  - Use either manual or mechanical/electrical wall jacks to assist with the lifting and placing of balloon framed walls.
  - If the manual lifting method is chosen and a determination is made that a method exists to safely lift these walls, assure that a sufficient number of workers are continually assisting while each wall is being raised to prevent the wall from falling back onto them and to prevent overexertion by workers lifting each wall.
  - Require employees to use the proper procedures for engaging load-handling attachments onto forklifts or cranes. Make these safe lifting procedures part of the company’s safety and health program.