

# Working At Height

## Introduction:

'Work at height' means work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury (for example a fall through a fragile roof) *HSE 2021*. Work at height could also be from ground level, such as when excavating to form trenches. The work at height regulations 2005 main purpose is to prevent death & injuries resulting in falls from height.

## Fact Check:

### According to the HSE:

During 2019/20, falls from height within the construction industry accounted for 19% of non-fatal injuries but was responsible for 47% of the fatalities recorded in that same period!!

Working at height remains the most dangerous activity within the construction industry.

**Discuss with your team locations, places, tasks and situations where workers are likely to fall.**

Ladders, vehicles, machinery, platforms, stairs, roof, scaffold, racking, excavations.....



## What Does The Law Say?

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 apply to all work at height, where there is risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury.

The regulations place specific duties on employers and those who manage/oversee work at height.

An employer must ensure:

- Those involved in the task are deemed competent.
- Works are planned and organized
- A risk assessment has been carried out
- Appropriate tools and equipment are selected
- Equipment is maintained and regularly inspected
- Risks associated with working on or near fragile surfaces are managed.

# Hierarchy Of Controls

There are a number of methodologies to control and manage working at height, but in principle following this basic hierarchy of control, working at height can be completed safely. An acronym to remember is A.P.M:

## **A—Avoid work at height. How Can This be done?**

- Complete as much of the task from ground level where possible.
- Use tools that are extendable.
- Avoid working on or near fragile surfaces.

**Can your team give any examples of how work at height could be avoided in their day to day activities?**

## **P— Prevent Falls From Occurring**

- Use collective measures over individual measures: Perimeter guard rails, scaffolding towers, use of MEWPS for those carrying out the work, podiums with guard rails.
- Remember to consider prevention of tools and equipment falling too! This could include the use of guards and netting.

## **M— Minimise the distance and potential consequence/outcome of a fall occurring.**

- This could be in the form of safety netting
- Air bag systems.
- Personal fall arrest systems/harnesses.
- Exclusion zones may help prevent hazards to those working below.

# Types Of Access Equipment

**Can you name various types of access equipment? Discuss these with your team and highlight the control measures required to prevent falls from height.**

- MEWPS
- Ladders
- Podiums
- Scaffold Systems
- Rope Access

# Knowledge Check:

## At what height should guard rails be installed?

For construction work, handrails must be set at a minimum height of 950mm. Any gaps between the top and intermediate rail should not exceed 470mm. Toe boards of 100mm in height are also accepted.

## Can you name the three steps in the hierarchy of control for working at height?

- Avoid
- Prevent
- Minimise

## Can you name the hazards associated with using MEWPS?

Falling objects, overloading, overturning, trapping, collision, collapse, contact with services.....

## What Class of ladder is recommended for construction work?

Class 1

## When considering harnesses/lanyards, what is the difference between fall arrest and fall restraint?

Fall arrest systems will stop you in the process of a fall, whereby a fall restraint system will keep you from the edge, preventing a fall from occurring.

## What is the industry qualification required to erect and inspect mobile tower scaffolding?

PASMA—Prefabricated Access Suppliers & Manufacturers Association

## At what point should a mobile tower be inspected and why?

- Law!
- Before First Use
- After changes, modifications are made
- At suitable intervals as indicated by the tag/inspection records.

# Register

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