Work at Height / Falling Objects

Guardrails may be required to make a work platform or other place of work safe by preventing falls. They must be strong enough and secured to prevent them breaking or moving if someone falls against them. The rail should not allow a person to fall over, under or between them.

Equipment designed to catch a falling person, e.g. safety nets, bean bags, must be erected by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. A rescue plan will be needed if this type of equipment is used.

Personal fall protection equipment, e.g. lanyards, safety harnesses and work positioning equipment should only be used if the risk assessment demonstrated that the use of other, safer equipment, was not practical. They must be strong enough, correctly adjusted and fitted and suitably anchored. A rescue plan will be needed if this type of equipment is used.

This equipment must be visually checked before each use and must be inspected by a competent person at least every six months.

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This equipment must be visually checked before each use and must be inspected by a competent person at least every six months.
Work at Height / Falling Objects

What to Do as an Employer?
- All activities involving work at heights have to be risk assessed and control measures have to be put in place so that work at height is avoided wherever possible, e.g. rain showers be delayed until an extensible ladder is available or a machine is used.
- Where falls cannot be prevented, suitable work equipment is required to minimise the distance someone could fall should they lose their balance.
- Employers involved in work at height are instructed and trained, e.g. in the safe use, storage and maintenance of appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety harnesses.
- Equipment for work at height is inspected and records are kept.
- The risks from fragile surfaces and falling objects are controlled.

What Do Employees Have to Do?
- Employees also have responsibilities in relation to preventing accidents including:
  1. Protecting their own health and safety and that of anyone who may be affected by what they do or the work they do.
  2. Co-operating with their employer in relation to carrying out work at height safely.
  3. Not being under the influence of any intoxicant to the extent that they could be a danger to themselves or others.

How do I decide what work equipment is suitable for work at height?
- This choice of equipment will depend on the risk assessment. There is a wide range of work equipment suitable for different environments and different activities. Whatever equipment is selected it must be fit for purpose, in good condition, wrong equipment can cause serious harm.
- The precautions taken must be proportionate to the risk involved, i.e. how serious the harm would be if no action was taken.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

What do I have to do as an employer?
- A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people as a result of a work activity. It allows you to put in place arrangements and controls to prevent or minimise risks from working at height.
- Safe systems of work for operating and carrying out work at height.
- Safe systems for protecting people from the consequences of work at height.
- The precautions taken must be proportionate to the risk involved, i.e. how serious the harm would be if no action was taken.

What are the steps involved in carrying out a risk assessment?
1. Look at the hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done.
- Figure 4 opposite gives an example of a control measure that has been implemented. The employer is using a lifting platform as ‘up and over’ guard rail in a storage mezzanine area. Once completed it will be removed or put into storage without exposing the employees to the risk of falls from an open edge.
- The employer involved in the work activity at height, and those who may be affected by the work, must be informed of the hazards and control measures to be used.
- Once completed it will allow pallets of product to be lifted to a mezzanine ledge.

How do I decide what work equipment is suitable for work at height?
- Equipment chosen to access the work area at height will be suitable for work at height.
- Where possible you must choose equipment that protects them one by one, e.g. when working on a car roof.
- Consider the use of work equipment that is light work, low risk and of short duration.
- The steps involved in carrying out a risk assessment.
- How do I carry out a risk assessment for work at height?
- A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people as a result of a work activity. It allows you to put in place arrangements and controls to prevent or minimise risks from working at height.
- Where possible you must choose equipment that protects them one by one, e.g. when working on a car roof.
- Other Equipment
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.
- Figures 6 and 8 gives an example of a well secured ladder.
- Fabrication of an up and over handrail.

Ladders
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries. ladders should only be used when the risk assessment shows other work equipment is not suitable and where the work activity is a light work, low risk and of short duration.

Don’t:
- Do a daily pre-use check.
- Secure it.
- Do set up on firm ground, insets on a movable surface, e.g. pallets, blocks, etc.
- Do have a good grip on the ladder handles.
- Do have a ladder at a safe angle (1 in 4 for every 1 run).
- Do use for light work only.
- Do grip the stiles while climbing.
- Do use for light work only.
- Do work on the top three rungs, or top two steps for stepladders.
- Do have a strong upper resting point.
- Do grip the stiles while climbing.
- Do have ladder at a safe angle (1 in 4 for every 1 run).
- Do use for light work only.
- Do use for light work only.
- Do have a strong upper resting point.

Figure 1
- Riggimg lighting for a concert or stage production (see Figure 1).

Figure 2
- Window cleaning (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
- Lightimg rigging.

Figure 4
- Fabrication of an up and over handrail.

Figure 5
- Boom hoist.

Figure 6
- Figure 6 gives an example of a well secured ladder.

Figure 7
- Work equipment used for the lifting of persons is subject to a detailed comprehensive inspection, called a thorough examination, which should be carried out by a competent person at least every six months.

Figure 8
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 9
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 10
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 11
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 12
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 13
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 14
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 15
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 16
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 17
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 18
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 19
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 20
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 21
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 22
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 23
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 24
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.

Figure 25
- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guard rails on the platform instead of a ladder. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 26
- Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from a ladder accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or handling a heavy object can create many injuries.
What do I have to do as an employer?

- All activities involving work at height have to be risk assessed and control measures have to be put in place so the work at height is avoided wherever possible. e.g. can tasks be done using an extendable pole while staying on the ground instead of climbing a ladder?
- The risk of falling is minimized where work at height is unavoidable, e.g. make sure there is a parapet or double handrail around a work area at height.
- Where falls cannot be prevented, suitable work equipment is used to minimize the distance someone could fall and the consequences of the fall, e.g. can windows be cleaned using an extendable pole while staying on the ground instead of safety harnesses with lanyards.

What do I have to do as an employer?

- Employers involved in work at height are instructed and trained, e.g. in the safe use, storage and maintenance of appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety harnesses.
- Equipment for work at height is inspected and records are kept.
- The risks from fragile surfaces and falling objects are controlled.

What do employees have to do?

- Employees have responsibilities in relation to preventing accidents including:
  - Protecting their own health and safety and that of anyone who may be affected by what they do or do not do.
  - Co-operating with their employer in relation to carrying out work at height safely.
  - Not being under the influence of any intoxicant to the extent that they could be a danger to themselves or others.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

Figure 1 Rigger lighting for a concert or stage production (see Figure 3).

Figure 2 Rigging lighting for a concert or stage production (see Figure 2).

Figure 3 Window cleaning (see Figure 2).

Figure 4 Fabrication of an up and over guard rail on a storage mezzanine edge.

Figure 5 Show an example of work equipment used for the lifting of personnel.

Figure 6 Give an example of a well secured ladder.

Figure 7 Ideal position.

Figure 8 Animation of use of a pent and fall.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

- Never engaging in any improper conduct or behavior that could endanger themselves or others.
- Participating in health and safety training.
- Making proper use of all equipment and machinery, including personal protective equipment, provided and not misusing same.
- Reporting any defects in the place of work, equipment, etc.

How do I carry out a risk assessment for work at height?

- A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people as a result of a work activity. It allows you to put in place arrangements and controls to eliminate or reduce risks from working at height.
- Safe systems of work for organising and carrying out work at height.
- Safe systems for selecting suitable work equipment to perform work at height.
- Safe systems for protecting people from the consequences of work at height. The procedures taken must be proportionate to the risk involved, i.e. use sufficient means available to prevent the risk.

The following are the steps involved in carrying out a risk assessment:

1. Look at the hazards.
2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done.

Figure 4 opposite gives an example of a control measure being implemented. This employer is using a platform as ‘up and over’ guard rail in a storeroom mezzanine edge. Once completed it will be clipped to an open edge to be removed or put into storage without exposing the employees to the risk of falls from an open edge.

The employees involved in the work activity at height, and those who may be affected by the work, must be informed of the hazards and control measures to be used.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

- For some work at height activities it may be necessary to have emergency plans or procedures in place before work starts such as a rescue plan, e.g. in the distance of a safe work method, an appropriate fall arrest system to be used, in case of an employee falls and becomes suspended.

How do I decide what work equipment is suitable for work at height?

This choice of equipment will depend on the risk assessment. There is a wide range of work equipment suitable for different environments and different activities. Whatever equipment is selected it must be fit for purpose, in good condition, work effectively and safely.

Where possible you must choose equipment that protects all the people working at height in preference over equipment that protects only one, e.g. harnesses around the edge of the work area at height instead of safety harnesses with breakers.

The choice of equipment has to be specific to the work environment, and the type and duration of the task.

Equipment chosen to access the work area at height will depend on the use, e.g. frequent use, bulky or heavy materials to be carried. Employees must not have to climb over guardrails or step over gaps to get to the work area.

Work equipment used for the lifting of persons is subject to a detailed comprehension inspection, called a thorough examination, which should be carried out by a competent person at least every six months.

Equipment chosen to access the work area at height will depend on the use, e.g. frequent use, bulky or heavy materials to be carried. Employees must not have to climb over guardrails or step over gaps to get to the work area.

Accessories for attaching to lifting equipment, e.g. chains, slings, etc., must also be examined every month. All lifting equipment must be inspected weekly by the owner or user and records of these and all relevant inspections and examinations must be kept.

Proper maintenance is also essential in ensuring that the equipment is safe to use.

Ladders are commonly used in most workplaces. However the risks involved in using ladders is usually underestimated. Each fall from ladders accounts for many serious work-related injuries each year. Lifting or carrying heavy items up stairs and over long distances can cause many injuries. Ladders should only be used when the risk assessment shows other work equipment is not suitable and where the work activity is a light work, low risk and of short duration.

Don’t
- Don’t overreach, keep your belt buckle between the upper handrail and the upper edge of the platform.
- Don’t carry out work which causes sideways loadings.
- Don’t work on top three rungs, or top two steps for stepladders.
- Don’t climb over guardrails or step over gaps to get to the platform.
- Don’t work on top three rungs, or top two steps for stepladders.

Other Equipment

Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guardrails at the end platforms instead of ladders. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.
What do I have to do as an employer?

- All activities involving work at height have to be risk assessed and control measures have to be put in place so that work at height is avoided wherever possible. e.g. cut windows for cleaning using an extendable pole while staying on the ground instead of climbing a ladder?
- The risk of falling is minimised where work at height is done, and where the work activity is less serious, i.e. less serious the harm caused if a fall occurs.
- All work at height is properly planned, organised, supervised and carried out. Where falls cannot be prevented, suitable work equipment is used to minimise the distance somebody is exposed to the risk of a fall. The place where work at height is performed is safe, and all work equipment is safe to use.
- Where the risk of falling is reduced where work at height is done, and where the work activity is less serious, i.e. less serious the harm caused if a fall occurs.
- All work at height is properly planned, organised, supervised and carried out. Where falls cannot be prevented, suitable work equipment is used to minimise the distance somebody is exposed to the risk of a fall. The place where work at height is performed is safe, and all work equipment is safe to use.
- The place where work at height is done is safe, and employees can get to that place without taking account of weather conditions if the place is outdoors.

What do employees have to do?

- Employees involved in work at height are instructed and trained, e.g. in the safe use, storage and maintenance of appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety harnesses.
- Equipment for work at height is inspected and records are kept.
- The risk from fragile surfaces and falling objects are controlled.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

- Not engaging in any improper conduct or behavior that could endanger themselves or others.
- Participating in health and safety training.
- Making proper use of all equipment and machinery, including personal protective equipment, provided and not making same.
- Reporting any defects in the place of work, equipment, etc.

How do I carry out a risk assessment for work at height?

- A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people as a result of a work activity. It allows you to put in place arrangements and control for eliminating or reducing risks from working at height.
- Safe systems of work for selecting suitable work equipment to perform work at height.
- Safe systems for protecting people from the consequences of work at height. The precautions taken must be proportionate to the risk involved, i.e. how serious the harm caused if a fall occurs. The following are the steps involved in carrying out a risk assessment:
  1. Look at the hazards.
  2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
  3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done.

For some work at height activities it may be necessary to have emergency plans or procedures in place before work starts such as a rescue plan, i.e. in the absence of a safe work method, an appropriate fall arrest system has to be in place. A rescue plan must be in place in case an employee falls and becomes suspended.

Work at Height / Falling Objects

- Accessories for attaching to lifting equipment, e.g. chains, shooks, etc., must also be examined every month. All lifting equipment must be inspected weekly by the owner or user and records of these inspections and examinations must be kept. Proper maintenance is also essential in ensuring that the equipment is safe to use.
- The precautions taken must be proportionate to the risk involved, i.e. how serious the harm caused if a fall occurs. The following are the steps involved in carrying out a risk assessment:
  1. Look at the hazards.
  2. Decide who might be harmed and how.
  3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done.

Figure 1

- Figure 1: Workplace lighting (safety lighting). Outside work at night must be properly lit. Wattage levels must be adequate to ensure that hazards and control measures are visible.

Figure 3

- Figure 3: Window cleaning. Employees must not have to reach over equipment to clean windows. This is not something that can be done safely, i.e. from the ground. Consider the use of work equipment that protects them one by one, e.g. a cherry picker for cleaning windows.

Figure 3

- Figure 3: Retail displays on a mezzanine edge (see Figure 2). Dressing retail displays on a mezzanine edge (see Figure 2).

Figure 5

- Figure 5: Work platform. A work platform is a self-contained, temporary structure, e.g. pallets, blocks, etc., on which employees can work at height. A work platform must be fixed or securely held in position, i.e. not portable. It must not be used for a purpose other than work at height. A work platform must be inspected and maintained regularly. It must be checked before it is used (e.g. by looking for loose or worn components). It must be used only for the work for which it is designed. Work platforms must be constructed to prevent falls. If they are not, an alternative safe method of working must be used. Work platforms must be inspected and maintained regularly. They must be checked before they are used (e.g. by looking for loose or worn components). They must be used only for the work for which they are designed. Work platforms must be constructed to prevent falls. If they are not, an alternative safe method of working must be used.

Other Equipment

- Consider the use of work platforms with handrails on the steps and guardrails on the platform instead of ladders. Figure 7 gives an example of a work platform.

Figure 7

- Figure 7: Work platform.
Work at Height / Falling Objects

Introduction

This information sheet gives employers and employees practical advice on work at height and falling objects and how to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm or damage occurring. It will assist you in identifying activities in your workplace that involve work at height or where there is a risk of objects falling.

Examples of work at height include:

- Using a ladder, kick stool or step ladder in a stock room, undercupboard or store cupboard.
- Using trestles or ladders to paint or clean windows.
- Working on the back of a lorry to cover a load.
- Working in an overhead crane cabin.
- Working close to an open excavation or cellar trap.

Work at height is working in a place where a person could be injured by falling from it, or being struck by a falling object.

What is Work at Height?

Work at height is working in a place where a person could be injured by falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.

Guardrails may be required to make a work platform or other place of work safe by preventing falls. They must be strong enough and secured to prevent them breaking or moving if someone falls against them. The rails should not allow a person to fall over, under or between them.

Equipment designed to catch a falling person, e.g. safety nets, bean bags, must be erected by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions. A rescue plan will be needed if this type of equipment is used.

Personal protective equipment, e.g. harnesses, safety harnesses and work positioning equipment should only be used if the risk assessment demonstrated that the use of other, safer equipment was not practical. They must be strong enough, correctly adjusted and fitted and suitably anchored. A rescue plan will be needed if this type of equipment is used.

The surface may be strong enough to take a person’s weight but what if they are carrying a load or if they fall from a height onto the surface? How has age, weight but what if they are carrying a load or if they fall from a height onto the surface? How has age, weight, environment, equipment and other circumstances impacted on the strength of the surface?

How do I control the risk from falling objects?

As part of the risk assessment process employers must take suitable steps to prevent the fall of any material or object where necessary to prevent injury to employees or others.

The risk of falling materials should be minimised by keeping work areas at height clear of loose material, equipment or storing materials well back from edges. Materials stored at height should be secured in such a way as to prevent them falling, e.g. by beingوجد in the work area or being fixed to the wall of the storage area. Review the storage of improvised at height to keep only small amounts of height and store the rest at ground level.

Ways of preventing objects rolling or being knocked off an edge might include the use of fenders, treads or ladders, boards (boards put lengthways at edge of storage area) or solid barriers.

When using racking for storage as a general rule heavier items should be stored at lower levels with lighter items at higher levels. Racking or shelves must be strongly constructed to hold the weight of loads. Racks or shelves must not be overloaded and the maximum safe load must be prominently marked on all racks. Racking must be erected as per the manufacturer’s instructions, including appropriate security and anchorage. Furthermore, uprights (legs) must be protected from damage occurring. It will assist you in identifying activities in your workplace that involve work at height or where there is a risk of objects falling.