

Working at height

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Outline	This talk covers what you need to think about and do, before and during working at height.



Examples of working at height activities with suitable control measures



Work at height should be regarded as working in any place from where a fall could potentially cause an injury.

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Hazards

1. The incorrect selection or use of access equipment for the task is one of the biggest causes of falls from height. Never use the wrong piece of equipment just because it is all you have available.
2. Adverse weather conditions must be anticipated and suitable precautions taken – beware of wet, windy or icy weather.
3. Too much material on a working platform can make access difficult or make the platform unstable.
4. Don't allow rubbish to accumulate. Use a chute or lower materials properly.

Before working at height

1. All work at height must be avoided where possible. If work at height cannot be avoided then a collective system to prevent falling (such as scaffolding, a MEWP or a mobile tower) should be used.
2. All work at height must be carried out in accordance with the safe system of work provided.
3. The consequences of any fall should be minimised by using an appropriate soft-landing system, net or, as a last resort, a safety harness.
4. The correct work equipment that is suitable for the task must be provided.
5. All equipment provided must be inspected and maintained.
6. Ensure you receive the correct information, instruction and training on the safe use of access equipment.
7. Ensure you have the right skills, knowledge, training and experience for the job.
8. Ladders and stepladders should only be used for light work of a short duration and where there is a low risk of falling.
9. Fall protection (such as edge protection systems, barriers and perimeter scaffolds) should be installed to prevent the risk of materials or persons falling.
10. Access ladders must extend at least 1 m above the stepping-off point, be secured, and rest at the correct angle (one unit out to four units up or 75°).

Safe working on roofs

1. Fragile surfaces (such as cement roof sheets and skylights) must be identified with signs. Measures should be taken to stop you falling through a fragile surface.
2. A safe system of work must be devised and implemented where the roof would otherwise be liable to collapse under a person's weight. A temporary platform is normally used.
3. If edge protection or a soft-landing system cannot be used, it may be necessary to use a safety harness and lanyard. A secure, designated anchorage point and training will be necessary.
4. Openings must have a securely fixed cover or guard; if removed for any reason, additional protection measures must be installed and the cover or guard replaced as soon as is practicable.
5. Safe means of access must be provided (such as a temporary staircase or fixed ladder with a gate).
6. Bitumen boilers require a fire-resistant drip tray and appropriate fire extinguisher.



What is the definition of working at height?

What should be identified before work at height starts?

Above what height must edge protection, toe-boards and guard-rails be erected?

When might a temporary platform be used?

How far should ladders extend above a stepping-off point?



Now inform your workers of company policy on working at height.