

# Working at Height

Pocket guide



# A journey to competence

## Industry Perspective

- Construction accounts for about **5%** of employees in the UK but also for **29%** of UK fatal accidents
- In 2013/14 there were **42** fatalities in construction
- In industry there are over **35** deaths and over **5,000** major injuries a year from falls from height
- **60%** of major injuries result from falls from below head height
- Slips, trips and falls from height cost society **£800 million** per annum
- In 2013/14, **2.3 million** working days were lost in construction of these **567,000** were due to falls from height

**Around 45% of fatal accidents in construction are caused by falls from height\***

\*Source: HSE

## Competence is skills, knowledge AND behaviour

Most accidents are caused by people and competence can be improved with a little more thought in three areas:

- **Self-awareness:** where operatives consider themselves and their personal role in the process
- **Situational awareness:** where the unexpected is considered, for example, when working in unfamiliar surroundings
- **Risk awareness:** which requires a broader appreciation of risk beyond standard assessment

# Work at Height Regulations 2005 (as amended)

## The six guiding principles

1. Regulations affect anyone, anywhere at any height, even below ground
2. Risk assessment: three-stage 'hierarchy of control' (avoid, prevent, minimise)
3. Select the right equipment
4. Use the equipment correctly
5. Requires planning, organisation and competence
6. Collective responsibility



# 1. Apply to anyone, anywhere, at any height

The regulations define 'Working at Height' as work in any place where a person can fall a distance and could suffer injury.

This can be above or below ground, so if you are working on a roof or beside a trench and you could fall, you are working at height.

Fragile surfaces that you could fall through are also covered in the legislation.

## Look out for yourself and your mates

The regulations apply to everyone. From the builder on-site to the office temp. It includes all employees, sub-contractors and the self-employed.

You have a duty of care to look out for your mates as well as yourself.

If you see an accident waiting to happen you **MUST** act and report the incident to a supervisor.

# 2. Risk assessment

## 'Hierarchy of control'

Risk assessment is a legal requirement.

The HSE suggests a single approach to risk assessment based on a three-stage 'hierarchy of control': avoid, prevent, minimise.

Your risk assessment should include a written method statement approved by your supervisor

## Avoid

Avoid working at height if possible.

Find a safer alternative e.g. assemble a structure on the ground or use product extensions.



Product extensions

### 3. Select the right equipment

#### Prevent

Do everything possible to prevent a fall. Fit guard rails and toe boards, and use fall prevention and Safety decking systems.



Safety decking

#### Minimise

Minimise the consequences of a fall. Consider collective protection before personal protection and use fall arrest equipment as a last resort.



Air cushions

Selecting the right equipment for the job is essential to working safely and a 'make do' mentality has no place in today's working environment.

As part of your risk assessment, you should also consider the working conditions, duration, frequency and user competence as well as the risk of erecting and dismantling equipment.

Speedy brochures and our new online video library provide information that can help with product selection and safe usage.

#### Low level access

Low level access equipment provides a safer alternative to ladders and is a more efficient option than access towers to increase productivity on-site.

They can also be used in narrow spaces where access towers are impractical.

## 4. Use the equipment correctly

Having chosen the right equipment for the job, ensure the user is fully trained and competent to do so. If you are unsure, ask for advice or consider training courses available from Speedy Training.



1. Anti-surf podium 2. Access tower 3. Working platform  
4. Fall arrest equipment 5. Power scissor 6. Electric scissor lift

- Ensure that the person using the equipment is trained and competent to do so
- When hiring equipment ensure you get proper hand-over instructions
- Consider ground and weather conditions and always follow manufacturer's operating instructions
- If in doubt, ask for advice and/or training

## 5. Requires competence and planning

The regulations state that no one should be involved in any aspect of working at height unless they are fully trained and competent to do so. This includes planning, organisation, supervision and the use of equipment.

- Competence means skills, knowledge AND behaviour
- Don't work at height unless you are competent to do so
- Don't use equipment unless properly trained
- All work should be planned and supervised
- All work should be carried out safely
- Access equipment should be inspected by a competent person before use and when moved

## 6. Collective responsibility

Responsibility for safety in the workplace is down to you and everyone else at work.

It's not about looking after number one. Collective responsibility means looking out for everyone.

- Keep your eyes and ears open
- Warn others of potential danger and report it immediately to the supervisor
- Use all equipment safely and ensure that others do the same
- Mark-off all danger areas clearly
- Consider the dangers of falling objects and fragile surfaces



Call 0845 609 9998

Email [safety@speedyservices.com](mailto:safety@speedyservices.com)

Click [speedyservices.com/intelligentsafety](https://speedyservices.com/intelligentsafety)

