

England, Scotland and Wales

The Work at Height Regulations
2005 (as amended)

Northern Ireland

The Work at Height Regulations
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Work at Height

Working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries, especially in the construction and manufacturing industries. Common cases include falls from ladders and through fragile roofs.

Work at height means work in any place, including at or below ground level, where a person could fall a distance to cause injury.

Employers can take simple, practical measures to reduce the risk of their workers falling while working at height.

What do I have to do?

You must make sure that **all** work at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent (having the skills, knowledge and experience) to do the job. This must include the use of the right type of access equipment.

To prevent or minimise risk when planning for work at height, consider what needs to be done and take a sensible, risk-based approach to identify suitable precautions.

Control measures

There is a simple hierarchy of control measures (outlined below) which you should follow to minimise the risk of a fall from height. The hierarchy should be followed **systematically**, and only when one level is not reasonably practicable should the next level be considered.

Those in control of the work **need to** do the following:

- Avoid work at height where they can.
- Use work equipment to prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided.
- Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use work equipment to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall if one occurs.
- Always consider measures that protect all those at risk, or collective protection measures such as scaffolds, nets and soft landing systems, before you consider measures that only protect the individual, or personal protection measures such as harnesses.

Dos and don'ts of working at height

Do:

- Make sure the surface/access equipment in use is stable and strong enough to support the worker's weight and that of any equipment. Any edge protection should be wide enough and strong enough to prevent a fall.
- Work as much as possible from the ground or partly from the ground. For example, assemble structures on the ground and lift them into position with lifting equipment.

- Take precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces, such as an asbestos cement roof, to prevent a fall or to minimise the distance and reduce injuries in the event of a fall.
- Ensure workers can get safely to and from where they want to work at height, and also consider emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.
- Make sure everyone involved is competent to do the work they are responsible for, including those who plan and organise it.
- Choose the most appropriate equipment for the type of work being done and how often it will be used.
- Provide protection from falling objects.
- Make sure equipment used for work at height is well maintained and inspected regularly.

Don't:

- Overload ladders. The worker and anything he or she is taking up should not exceed the highest load stated on the ladder.
- Overreach on ladders or stepladders. Keep your belt buckle (navel) inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task.
- Use ladders or stepladders if the nature of the work is deemed to be 'heavy' or if the task will take longer than 30 minutes to complete.
- Use ladders if workers cannot maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet) at the working position. If this is not possible, consider an alternative safe system of work.
- Let anyone who is **not** competent carry out work at height.

Case Study:

| Scenario | Solution |
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| <p>A large, independent installer of digital terrestrial and satellite equipment recognised it could be doing more to tackle falls, especially as engineers were installing aerials and dishes at a variety of heights from portable leaning ladders and roof ladders.</p> | <p>They took measures including making sure ladders were secured using an eyebolt and ratchet strap, and equipping appropriately trained workers with a specialist kit, such as a flexible safety line that can be attached to the secured ladder.</p> <p>Trained workers now wear a fall-arrest harness that can be attached to the line and the ladder. This means that the ladder cannot slip during use and, even if the engineer slips and falls from the ladder, the fall will be stopped.</p> |