



## Work at Height

Falling from height is the number one cause of fatal injuries to workers. The perception of work at height, and hence resource, is often directed towards tasks such as roof work or scaffolding. Whilst this is true with regard to fatalities it should be noted that circa 60% of major (fall from height) injuries occur from a fall less than 2.0M and circa 60% of over 3 day (fall from height) injuries occur within the service industry.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 removed the former 2.0M rule, requiring employers to assess all risks where “a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury”.

### MINIMUM STANDARDS

1. Work undertaken at height is assessed and documented as part of your health and safety management system ensuring:
  - All work at height is planned in advance.
  - The “hierarchy of control measures” is applied.
  - Competent people and the right equipment are selected for the task.
  - Persons undertaking the task are suitably trained.
  - Equipment provided is inspected and maintained.
  - Supervision and monitoring of work, as per the plans, is undertaken.
2. In applying the “hierarchy of control measures” you shall:
  - Avoid work at height where you can.
  - Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where you cannot avoid working at height; and
  - Where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 will apply. With regard to legal liability the regulations impose an absolute duty to manage the risk as per point one above. It is therefore essential to document all assessments; safe working procedures or method statements; training records; tool box talks; inspections and monitoring as appropriate for the task being undertaken.

The regulations also state that work at height must be “carried out in a manner which is so far as is reasonably practicable safe”. This provides an opportunity for claims defence but in the event of any claim it will be necessary to critically examine whether it was reasonably practicable to have introduced a better control in line with the hierarchy of control measures in point two above.

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### GUIDANCE & USEFUL INFORMATION

- HSE Website – [www.hse.gov.uk/falls](http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls)
- QBE: Working at Height Issues Forum (November 2006)

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