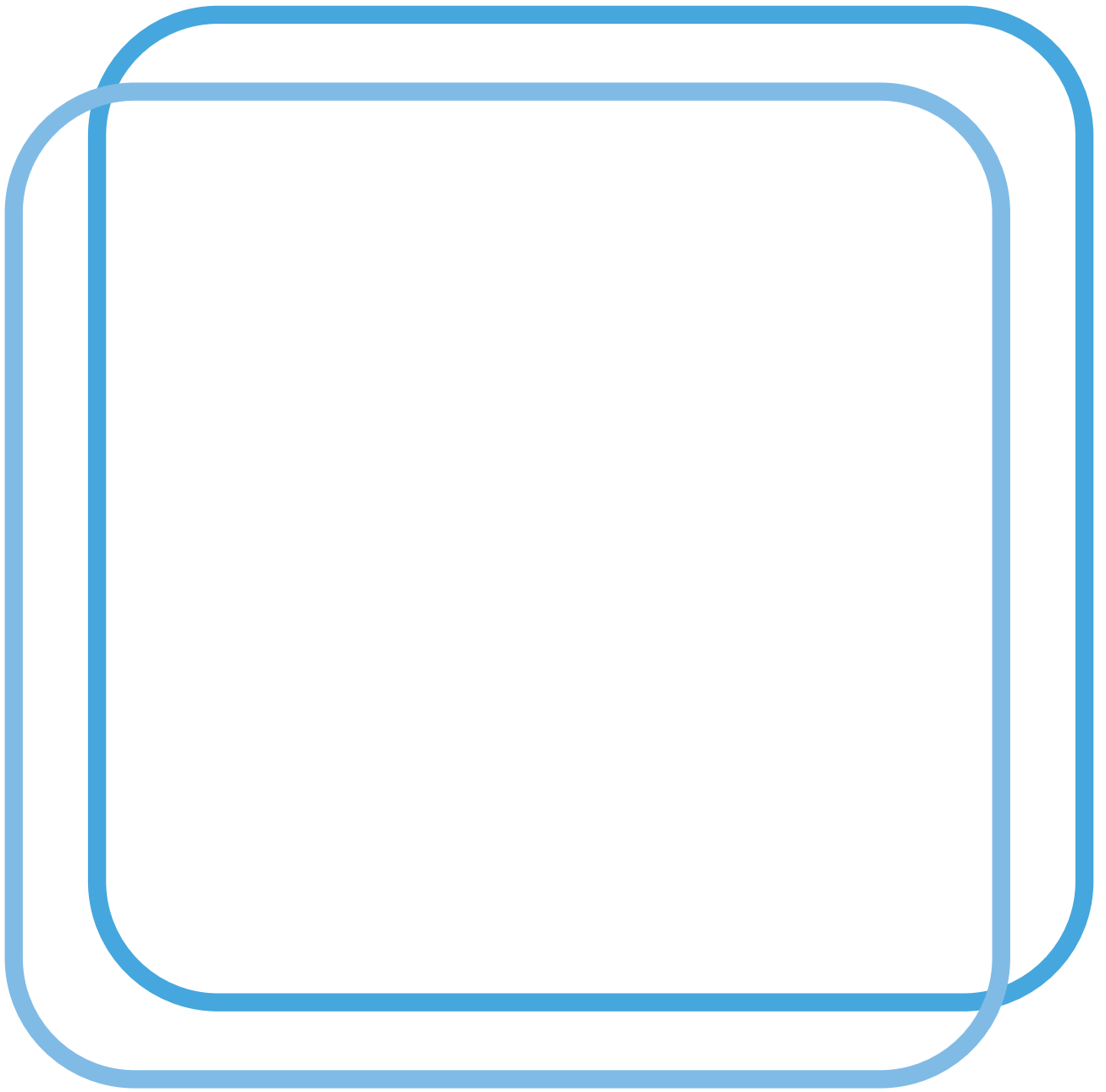


Working at Height



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Safer Business - Better Health

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Introduction

What is working at height?

Work at height means work in any place where, if precautions were not taken, a person could fall and injure themselves.

If you:

- work above ground level;
- could fall from an edge or through an opening or fragile surface; or
- could fall from ground level into an opening in a floor or hole in the ground;

you will be working at height, because you can fall from one level to another.

Examples of work at height include:

- using working platforms such as scaffolds, tower scaffolds, cherry pickers, scissor lifts and podium steps;
- work on a roof, piece of plant or equipment;
- using ladders or stepladders.

Why focus on working at height?

They remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury.

What precautions do I need to take?

Remember, work at height may be one off or routine. You will need to make sure you identify all tasks which require work at height, so you can make sure they are carried out safely.

The key to preventing injury from work at height is to carry out a

risk assessment of the task to be completed so you can choose the right precautions.

This is a simple process, answering the questions in the check sheet below will aid you in your risk assessment.

Working at Height Checklist

This checklist has been designed as an aid to help you in choosing the right precautions when looking at working at height tasks

Name of business:	
Address:	
Name of person completing:	Date:
Task:	

		Yes	No
1	<p>Can you avoid the need to work at height in the first place?</p> <p>Long-handed tools or other equipment can sometimes be used to safely carry out a task from ground level, e.g. a long-handed brush or roller for painting and water-fed poles with brushes for window cleaning. Think about whether it is possible to design out the need to work at height, e.g. could new or replacement services, such as pipes or cables, be put at ground level?</p> <p>If you can't avoid the need to work at height, you must try to make sure the risk of a fall is prevented.</p>		
2	<p>Can you prevent the fall?</p> <p>You can do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using an existing place of work. This is a place that is already safe, e.g. a roof with permanent guard rails or a parapet around the edges; or a piece of plant or equipment that has fixed, permanent guard rails around it; • using work equipment. If you cannot use an existing place of work, consider whether you can use work equipment to prevent people falling. Tower scaffolds, podium steps, cherry pickers and scissor lifts are some common examples of work equipment, which will do this because the working platforms have guard rails. If regular access is required, e.g. to an air conditioning unit on a roof, it may be reasonable to create a safe place of work by installing permanent guard rails to and around the work area and a fixed guarded stair way. <p>If you cannot put measures in place to prevent a fall, you must try to limit the risk by minimising the distance and/or consequences of a fall.</p>		

		Yes	No
3	<p>Can you minimise the consequences of a fall?</p> <p>You must first try to avoid and then prevent a fall before using measures that will only minimise or limit the consequences. Airbags and safety nets are examples of such measures, because they should minimise the risk of injury if someone falls. Fall arrest equipment will help minimise injury if someone falls, providing the equipment is set up correctly, users know how to look after it and they understand its limitations.</p> <p>When using any equipment for work at height, you also need to make sure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the people using it are trained to use it safely; • it is regularly inspected and well maintained; and • the work is supervised to check people are working safely <p>The routine use of ladders or step ladders does not provide measures which either prevent falls or minimise the consequences. You must be able to show that it was not reasonable to select alternative equipment because the task is low risk and of short duration.</p>		
4	<p>Have you identified whether there are any fragile surfaces?</p> <p>You need to be particularly aware of fragile materials when working at height, as their presence in or near the working area increase the risk. A fragile surface is one which would be liable to break if a person walked on it or fell onto it. Common examples include, fibre and asbestos cement roof sheets and many skylights, but could also include bridged materials in silos.</p> <p>You should make sure you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mark fragile surfaces with suitable, clear & prominent signage. • avoid the need to work on or near or pass across them by, e.g. repairing a skylight from underneath using a tower scaffold or from above using a cherry picker; • prevent a fall by using fixed walkways with guard rails to get across a fragile asbestos cement roof or use suitable working platforms with guard rails during work on or near a fragile surface; • minimise the consequences of a fall by using nets, airbags or fall arrest. 		

		Yes	No
5	<p>When selecting the work equipment required have you considered the following factors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the working conditions - whether there are slopes or poor ground conditions, obstructions, fragile surfaces and the surface load capacity. the distance to be climbed - portable ladders are less suitable for higher climbs particularly if loads are carried. the duration and frequency of use - longer duration or regular jobs generally justify a better standard of fall protection e.g. a tower scaffold, podium step or cherry picker rather than a ladder or stepladder. the distance and consequences of a potential fall - if you have to use a fall arrest system you must make sure there is adequate clearance for it to deploy. Remember that even falling a short distance can cause a serious injury. evacuation and rescue, if you have to use a fall arrest system, you must make sure a rescue can be carried out if a worker is left suspended from a roof edge. the installation and removal - look at the risks, not just those associated with the 'use' phase. It may take two or more people to assemble a tower to get onto a roof and install temporary edge protection, whereas the repair may need only one person on the roof, putting several people at risk so one person can work safely. A better solution would be to use a cherry picker, so one person can perform the task safely from the working platform. 		

What else do I need to do?

Make sure the people who select, assemble, use and supervise the use of the equipment have all relevant information, e.g. manufacturer's instructions; they have been trained and are competent. Make sure the equipment is regularly inspected and maintained, including ladders and stepladders.

This checklist has been produced to start you thinking of what risks / controls you have at the premise. The lists are **NOT** exhaustive and there maybe hazards / controls that have not been covered.

THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT A RISK ASSESSMENT