

Work at Height Regulations 2005

Guidance for event organisers

The Work at Height Regulations came into force on 6th April 2005. The following is a **brief** summary of key points. Organisers should ensure that all contractors and staff are aware of and comply with the regulations in full. These can be viewed at www.hse.gov.uk. A brief guide to the regulations is also available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf.

Please note that EC&O's safe working practices 'Mobile Elevating Work Platforms' and 'Ladders, Steps and Scaffold Towers', must also be adhered to and copies are available from your event manager, if required, to pass on to your contractors and exhibitors.

Organisation and planning

- Work at height must be properly planned and appropriately supervised.
- It must be carried out in a manner which is as safe as is reasonably practicable.
- Planning must include the selection of work equipment and emergencies and rescue. Where work takes place outdoors, weather conditions must also be taken into account.

Competence

- Staff involved in planning, undertaking and supervising work at height must be competent for their role.

Avoidance of risks

- Work at height must be risk assessed.
- It must be avoided where it is reasonably practicable to undertake a task without working at height.
- Where work at height is to take place, suitable and sufficient measures must be put in place to prevent a fall. This extends to access and egress, which must be:
 - a) stable, have sufficient dimensions and be designed to prevent a fall. There should be no gaps large enough for a person to fall through.
 - b) constructed to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of slips and trips and trapping between adjacent structures.

Where the above measures do not eliminate the risk of a fall, work equipment must be provided, as far as is reasonably practicable, to minimise the fall distance and the consequences of a fall. Training, instruction and other additional measures may also need to be provided.

Selection of work equipment

- The equipment selected for working at height must be appropriate and take into account all of the following:
 - a) The working conditions and the risk to personnel.
 - b) The distances to be negotiated with regard to the access to and egress from the work area.
 - c) The distance of and potential for fall.
 - d) The duration and frequency of use.
 - e) Emergency and rescue.
 - f) Additional risks posed by the installation and removal of the equipment.
 - g) Other provisions of the Work at Height Regulations.

Work equipment requirements

- Guard rails, toe boards, barriers, etc, must be of sufficient size and strength and placed and secured correctly (Schedule 2 of the Regulations provides dimensions).
- Working platforms and the supporting structure must be stable and capable of supporting the loads (Schedule 3 refers).
- Wheeled structures must have wheel locks or other measures to prevent slippage. They must be safely erected, used and dismantled.
- Nets, air bags and other collective safeguards must be risk assessed to demonstrate that no other, safer work equipment is available and that appropriate training has been provided. (Schedule 4 refers).
- Scaffolding has specific requirements (see Schedule 4), which include the provision of plans, calculations and measures to prevent objects falling.

Fragile surfaces

- The employer must ensure that staff do not work or walk over fragile surfaces. Where this is not feasible, the following measures must be put in place:
 - a) Suitable and sufficient walkways, coverings, or other suitable means.
 - b) Safety signage and warning notices must be displayed on approach.

Falling Objects/danger areas/fall protection systems

- The employer shall take steps to prevent the throwing, tipping and falling of objects.
- Where there is a risk of falls or falling objects, areas must be cordoned off and warning signs must be provided.
- Rope access and work positioning, fall arrest and fall restraint systems are covered in Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

Inspection

An inspection regime must be in place and must include inspection of work platforms above two metres every seven days. Schedule 7 of the regulations details the reporting requirements. In addition to compliance with LOLER, the following must be carried out:

- a) Checks prior to commencement of work.
- b) Reporting of unsafe conditions and activities

Ladders

Ladders are only to be used if the risk assessment has shown that the use of other equipment is not necessary, because of the following:

- a) Low risk
- b) Short duration of use
- c) Existing features on site which cannot be altered
- d) Provisions for safe positioning, securing and height of ladders

Users must maintain a safe handhold when carrying loads. A risk assessment may justify the use of step ladders without handholds used for carrying loads, when there is low risk or short duration of use.