

WORKING AT HEIGHT - FALLS

LEARNING OUTCOME

Describe the requirements of the current health and safety legislation and the control strategies needed to minimise or manage the hazards associated with working at heights.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

- Describe the requirement for a Safe Work Method Statement when working at height.
- Describe the hierarchy of control measures, when working at height.

REFERENCES

- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 – Part 4.4 Falls
- Work Health & Safety Regulation 2011 – Section 291 Meaning of High Risk Construction Work.
- Work Health & Safety Regulation 2011 – Section 299 for Safe Work Method Statements - Chapter 6 Construction work, Part 6.3 Duties of person conducting business or undertaking, in particular Sections 306A - 306Q
- Managing the risk of falls at workplaces Code of Practice 2018

ATTACHMENTS

- [Managing the risk of falls at workplace Code of Practice 2018](#)

WORKING AT HEIGHT - FALLS

HIGH RISK CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

With regard to working at heights, the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 s291 defines high risk construction work as construction work that;

- Involves a risk of a person falling more than 2.0 metres

Examples of someone who can fall are someone:

- In a basket of an elevating work platform
- On a ladder, scaffolding or working platform
- On a roof beam
- On a floor or deck
- On a bridge, road cutting or cliff

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT WORKING AT HEIGHT

Working at height has the potential for death or serious injury unless adequate control measures have been implemented.

Persons carrying out construction activity at a height of 2 metres or more may be exposed to the risk of death or injury from falling.

Persons may be exposed to the risk of falling from a height when carrying out a construction activity on or near the following:

- external faces, edges and the perimeter of buildings or structures;
- penetrations in the work environment from holes cut or formed in the working surface;
- roofs and floors that are in a fragile state;
- means of access;
- excavations;
- erection and dismantling of plant and framework.

SAFE WORK METHOD STATEMENTS

Planning is an integral part of carrying out any type of construction work. A safe work method statement is one of the tools used to manage workplace health and safety at a construction workplace and must be prepared before high risk construction work is carried out.

A Safe Work Method Statement must state:

- the hazards relating to the high risk construction work; and
- an assessment of the risks to health and safety which may result because of the hazards; and
- the control measures to be used to prevent or minimise the level of the risks; and
- how the control measures are to be monitored and reviewed

CONTROL MEASURES

The control measures to protect a person from the risk of falling from a height should be in place before any work at that height starts. When selecting control measures, regard should be had to the hierarchy of control measures, and eliminating the need to work at height or the risk of falling should be prioritised

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk of falling, the risk must be minimised. Several control measures are available to protect persons from the risk of falling from a height when carrying out work at that height. In some circumstances, more than one control measure may be necessary. The three levels of control measures, in order of preference, are:

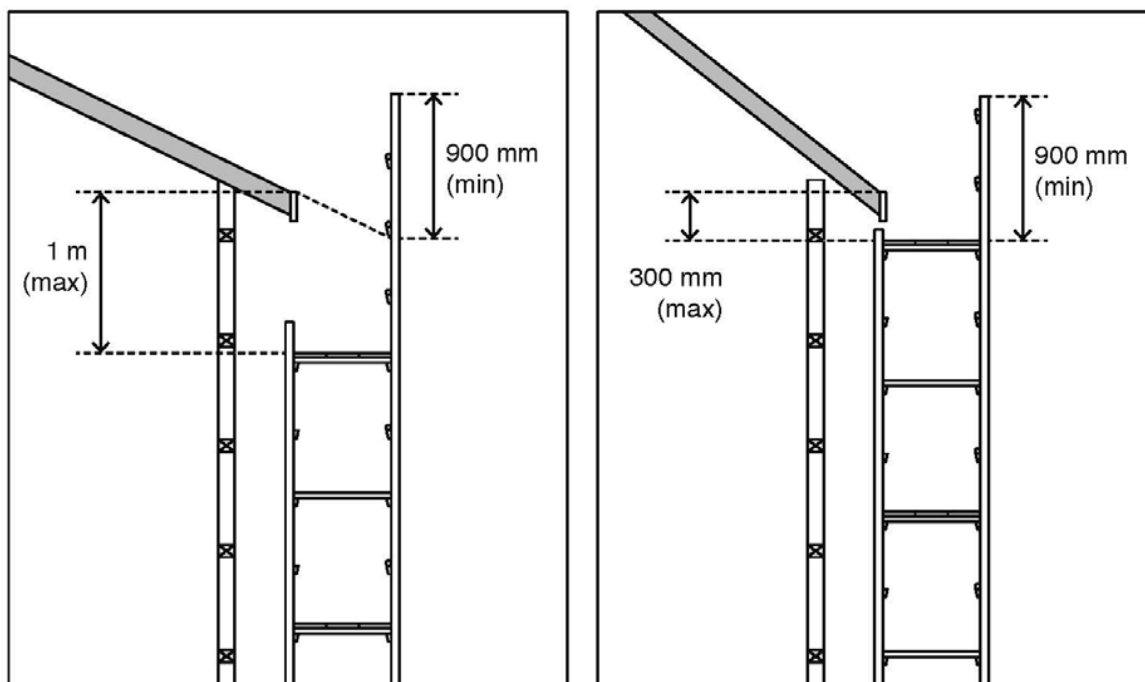
- erecting a physical barrier, such as an edge protection system or working platforms;
- providing personal fall protection such as a fall arrest system;
- measures to “catch” a person after the person has fallen, such as a safety net.

EDGE PROTECTION SYSTEMS

(Refer Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011, s306E).

An edge protection system is a barrier, which is erected around the edge of a building, structure or penetration. An edge protection system may consist of guard railing or vertical containment sheeting.

- Top rail 900 – 1100 mm
- Mid rail 450 – 550 mm
- Toe Board 150 mm



PERSONAL FALL PROTECTION

Personal fall protection systems are systems of work, including equipment, which secure a person to a building or structure. These systems should only be used where:

- it is not possible to work within the confines of a working platform or to provide other forms of fall protection such as guardrailing; or
- it is used in conjunction with other measures.

FALL ARREST SYSTEMS

(Refer Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 s306I).

A **fall arrest system** is a system that:

- is designed to arrest the fall of a person using it and prevent or minimise the risk of injury to the person as the fall is arrested; and
- consists of a harness attached to—
 - a device to absorb the energy of the falling person attached to a lanyard that is attached to a static line or anchorage point; or
 - a line that –
 - has a device that automatically locks the line, and absorbs the energy of the falling person; and

- is attached to a static line or anchorage point; or
- a lanyard that –
 - has a device that travels along a line or rail, automatically locks onto the line or rail, and absorbs the energy of the falling person; and
 - is attached to a static line or anchorage point.

A lanyard assembly consists of a lanyard and a personal energy absorber. The lanyard assembly should be as short as practicable and the working slack length not more than 2 metres. The fall arrest anchorage point (fixed or traveling on static lines) should be located so that the lanyard can be attached before the user moves into a position where he or she would be at risk from a fall. Anchorage points should have a force capacity of 15kN, or 21kN if two persons are using the anchorage point.

CONTROL MEASURES AFTER A PERSON HAS FALLEN

(Refer Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 s306J).

The use of control measures to “catch” a person after the person has fallen should only be used where it is not possible to provide any other more reliable means of fall protection. The control measures, which should be used to “catch” a person after the person has fallen, are:

- catch platforms; and
- safety nets.

Version	Date	Author
1	30/06/2018	WHSQ