



SAFETY STEPS: ESSENTIAL MESSAGES FOR WORK AT HEIGHT!

Safety Steps' is designed to help all those who produce outputs that are aimed at maintaining and improving safety during work at height (WAH), for the following audiences:

- designers
- clients
- managers (those managing WAH)
- supervisors*, and
- operatives*

Safety Steps is an *enabling* document. It provides essential messages that can be used - in whole or part - by those who aim to produce any type of output for these five target audiences. As such (with the possible exception of information for designers) is not designed to be deployed directly to these target audiences (*though the Safety Steps for Supervisors and Operatives are written in the first person, so that the content can be more easily adapted for other use in further outputs and communication channels).

As such, outputs derived from/informed by Safety Steps may include (and are not restricted to):

- Flow charts/infographics
- Training materials
- Toolbox talks/checklists
- Poster/sticker campaigns
- Rules and guidelines

Safety Steps covers *general information* on WAH rather than task-specific aspects. So, for example, the messages don't provide information about specific situations such as the use of scaffolding or mobile work platforms or working on roofs. However, the general information provided underpins any, more specific, WAH messages and information.

User comments

Safety Steps will be reviewed by CONIAC from time to time, to ensure that the general messages and other information continues to be suitable for the purpose above. If you have any comments on Safety Steps (including suggestions for changes, noting the intended purpose above) please contact: <https://accessindustryforum.org.uk/safety-steps/feedback/>

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Work at height (WAH): Safety Steps for...

3. MANAGERS

Managing WAH should communicate and co-operate with the client and others as necessary, to ensure the safety of those working at height, and others (including the public).

The amount of communication, co-ordination and co-operation required will depend on the risks and complexity of the WAH activity.

Communicating essential information

Examples of evidence to be *provided to the client*:

- that work at height will be planned and supervised by those who have sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to ensure safety
- a site-specific risk assessment and a Safe System of Work (SSoW)
- acknowledgement that the work will follow any client WAH safety rules, standards and/or safe working permits
- that any sub-contractors will be suitably managed, in line with the above
- Who, in your organization, is the contact with the client on WAH matters.

Examples of information that should be *obtained from the client*:

- any relevant WAH permits, rules or standards
- site safety-related information (e.g. fragile roofs, difficult access, unprotected edges, confined spaces, electrical and other)
- Information on WAH safety provisions e.g. anchor points, equipment testing.

Managers (or anyone else who is) planning work at height:

Consider The following steps should be considered when reviewing the SSoW (which may include a method statement, WAH management plan and/or the relevant parts of a Construction Phase Plan (if needed))	Control	Examples may include:
1. Avoid working at height	Fully assess the task to be undertaken – is it reasonably practicable, carry out the work another way other than at height?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using extendable tools from ground level • Installing cables at ground level • Lowering a mast to ground level • Assembly components at ground level and fit into place • Using emerging or other technologies (e.g. drones, aerial surveys)



Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC)

Managing Risk Well Working Group

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<p>2. Adopt a practical approach to planning work at height</p> <p>Ensure there is a site-specific risk assessment and SSoW, before WAH starts.</p> <p>If the work is construction work, consider WAH matters for the Construction Phase Plan.</p>	<p>Provide and obtain essential site-specific information</p> <p>Communicate and apply risk controls and make any necessary changes to the method of work if the risk changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heights of work activity • Duration of work • Frequency of work • Weather conditions • Indoor working conditions • Work equipment and materials required • Work segregation / cordoning off • Evacuation and rescue procedures
<p>3. Prevent falls from occurring</p>	<p>Identify and utilize an existing safe place of work</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable parapet walls • Suitable, robust working platform/ area • Defined access points • A flat roof with permanent edge protection • Fixed guard rails e.g. around plant, machinery, excavations/holes
<p>4. Prevent falls by providing collective protection</p>	<p>Select appropriate control measures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scaffolding • Temporary edge protection • Platform decking • Mobile towers • MEWPs
<p>5. Prevent falls through providing personal protection</p>	<p>Use a work restraint/travel restriction system that prevents a worker getting into a fall position</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed length lanyards/harnesses • Horizontal anchor line systems
<p>6. Minimize the distance and/or consequences of a fall using collective protection</p>	<p>Select equipment appropriate to the task and environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High safety netting • Airbags or soft-landing systems
<p>7. Minimize the distance of a fall using personal protection (the last resort).</p>	<p>Select appropriate equipment to the task and environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial rope access e.g. working on a building façade • Personal fall arrest system with secure anchor points.

Skills, knowledge and experience – managers should ensure that

- Work at height is planned and supervised by people who have sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to do the job safely
- Everyone engaged with work at height understands the task-relevant safe system of work (SSoW) – which may include a permit to work system - and any relevant parts of a Construction Phase Plan (CPP)
- Anyone under training works only under effective and competent supervision, in accordance with the SSoW

Equipment for working at height

- All access equipment to be assembled or installed, used and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions and current standards



- Where the effectiveness of the equipment depends on how it has been assembled or installed it should be inspected by a competent person before work commences
- Any access or safety equipment should be inspected daily/before a new work shift and any damaged equipment (e.g. due to physical wear, weather, or chemicals) – or any equipment with unauthorized modifications - must be withdrawn, replaced or repaired, as necessary to ensure safety
- Record all equipment inspections in line with statutory guidelines

All working platforms from where a person could fall must be inspected:

- At least every seven days
- After assembly or adaptation in any position
- After any event likely to affect its strength or stability (including adverse weather)
- Following the actual deployment of safety equipment (e.g. a fall, even without injury, into a safety net or air bag system)

Key Points

- Ensure that working surfaces are not overloaded with materials or equipment, and that they are kept clear (good housekeeping)
- Ensure workers can get safely to and from where they will work at height
- Ensure all surfaces for placing or attaching access equipment are stable and strong enough for use
- Ensure the work is properly segregated / cordoned off from passers by
- Ensure any changes to the work activity are re-assessed, and any changes to the risk of harm are dealt with before work continues
- Ensure that sufficient time has been allocated so that the task can be completed safely
- Provide sufficient protection from falling objects (e.g. materials and work equipment) for anyone who may be below
- Do not put or require anyone to work who known or suspected to be unfit to work at height.

Managers

Further sources of information

*Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 - and guide to the Regulations (LI53): Contractor duties
Work at Height Regulations 2005*

HSE: Work at Height: a brief guide (INDG 401)