



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/>

Conditions of use

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Any commercial use should also refer readers to an e-location where Safety Steps is freely available.

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

5. OPERATIVES

| Ensuring a Safe system of work (SSoW) at height | Examples may include... |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Whether it is simple or more detailed, there should always be a <u>safe system of work</u> (SSoW) that aims to ensure your safety when working at height (WAH).</p> <p>The SSoW must reflect the risk and complexity of the work at height activity.</p> <p>It may be very simple if the work at height is low risk, and of short duration, and in these situations it may not need to be written down.</p> | <p>You should be sufficiently trained to understand what the SSoW is for any type of work at height, even if it is low risk and short duration.</p> <p>Higher risk or more complex work at height activity requires a more detailed, written SSoW, based on a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.</p> <p>Your supervisor should tell you about any detailed SSoW which (in some situations) might need to include rescue provision.</p> |
| <p>2. Before you begin working at height, be aware of the SSoW for this activity (including any WAH 'permit to work' system, if needed).</p> <p>If you need to, ask your supervisor any safety-related questions or seek further clarification before starting – you don't have to be a trainee to raise a sensible safety question, to help ensure safe working.</p> <p>If you think any part of the planned work at height isn't safe, raise this immediately with your supervisor.</p> | <p>Any changes to the work that you believe the supervisor needs to know about.</p> |
| <p>3. Don't start work where you or others need to rely on equipment that you are not properly trained to use.</p> <p>Follow the correct SSoW – use all the risk control measures for the activity correctly, to ensure safe work.</p> | <p>Examples of risk control measures may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective protection to prevent a fall • Scaffolding • Temporary edge protection • Platform decking • Mobile towers • MEWPs <p><i>Personal protection to prevent a fall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restraints, including fixed lanyards and harnesses • Horizontal line systems <p><i>Collective measures to minimize distance or consequences of a fall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety netting • Airbags or soft-landing systems <p><i>Personal measures to minimize distance or consequences of a fall</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial rope access • Personal fall arrest system with secure, reliable anchor points. <p><i>Rescue equipment.</i></p> |



Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC)

Managing Risk Well Working Group

Simplifying risk management and helping business to grow

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|--|---|
| <p>4. Ensure that you only use ladders and steps as access (and without carrying heavy or awkward loads), or for low risk, short duration work at height.</p> | <p>Follow good practice when using all short duration access equipment.</p> |
| <p>5. If you think the work itself, or any other factors or pressures (e.g. not using control measures near the end of a job), are undermining safety, or you see or experience an unsafe situation, tell your supervisor.</p> <p>You should stop work if you have reason to believe there is serious and imminent danger to you or anyone else.</p> | <p>Any significant concerns or risks to safety during the activity.</p> |

To work safely at height you will need:

Sufficient skills, knowledge and experience to do the work involved

To understand any SSoW that is being used – if you do not, raise this with your supervisor before starting

To understand rescue equipment and procedures, where this is relevant

Equipment for working at height:

- always use the protective equipment provided
- always follow good practice when using WAH equipment

Don't make any unauthorized changes. If you see any:

- damaged equipment (e.g. due to physical wear, weather, or chemicals);
- equipment that has unauthorized alterations;
- safety equipment that has actually been deployed to prevent the consequences of a fall;

...you should not use it - withdraw the equipment from use and raise the matter immediately with your supervisor (only replace it with authorized equipment if you are authorized to do so);

If you are making a statutory or other formal inspection of protective or other equipment, ensure your inspection is properly recorded.

Ensure that:

- working surfaces are not overloaded with materials/equipment, and that they are kept clear (good housekeeping)
- you can get safely to and from where you will work at height
- all surfaces or structures where you aim to place/attach access equipment are stable and strong enough for use (i.e. you can rely on them) - conduct a visual inspection before use.
- all work platforms and work areas on structures are free from slip/trip hazards.
- you are fit - on the day - to work at height.
- you are able to concentrate on ensuring your own and others safety during WAH (by avoiding distractions such as using a mobile device).

Operatives