

Working at Height — Safe System of Work

Display a copy where the work is done.

Before you start

- Can this be done from the ground? Answer that honestly before anything else.
- If not, can you work from an existing safe place with guard rails?
- Choose the right equipment. A ladder is for short duration, low risk work only.
- Check the equipment is inspected, in date and undamaged.
- Check the ground and the weather.
- Assume every roof light and cement sheet is fragile.
- Clear and barrier the area below.
- Have a rescue plan in place before anyone goes up.

The numbers that get checked

Item	Requirement	Why
Minimum height for the regulations	There is NO minimum height	People are killed falling from below two metres. This is the most misunderstood point
The hierarchy	AVOID, PREVENT, MINIMISE	In that order, every time
Ladder angle	1 in 4, roughly 75 degrees	One out for every four up
Ladder contact	Three points of contact maintained	Two feet and a hand, or two hands and a foot
Ladder use	Short duration, low risk work only	If it is longer or heavier, use something else
Scaffold inspection	Before first use, and at least every 7 days	Plus after anything that could affect its stability
Fragile surfaces	Assume fragile until proven otherwise	Roof lights and cement sheets kill people every year
Rescue	A plan must exist BEFORE work starts	Suspension trauma develops in minutes. 999 is not a plan

While you are working

- Maintain three points of contact on a ladder.
- Do not overreach. Move the equipment instead.
- Do not carry heavy or awkward loads up a ladder.
- Keep tools tethered or in a bag. Never drop anything.
- Stay inside the guard rails and inside the MEWP basket.
- Watch the weather. Conditions change.

Stop immediately if

- The wind picks up beyond the agreed limit.
- The equipment is damaged, out of inspection date, or has been altered.

- You would have to overreach or stand on the top step.
- You encounter a fragile surface you were not expecting.
- Anyone is below the work without protection.
- There is no rescue plan and someone is on a harness.

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