



What is meant by "work at height"?

The Working at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR) have no minimum height requirement for work at height. They include all work activities where there is a need to control a risk of falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. This is regardless of the work equipment being used, the duration the person is at a height, or the height at which the work is performed. It includes access to and egress from a place of work. It would, for example, include:

- Working on a scaffold or from a mobile elevated work platform (MEWP);
- Working on the back of a lorry, e.g. sheeting a load;
- Container top working in docks, on a ship or in a freight yard;
- Arboriculture and forestry work performed in trees;
- Using cradles or ropes to gain access to parts of a building, or a ship under repair in a dry dock;
- Climbing permanent structures, such as gantries or telegraph poles;
- Working close to an excavation area or a cellar opening, where someone could fall into it and injure themselves or others;
- Painting, pasting or erecting bill posters at height;
- Work on staging or trestles, for example at a concert or for filming;
- Using a ladder/step ladder or kick stool for shelf filling, window cleaning, shop fitting or other maintenance tasks (e.g. changing a light bulb)
- Using man-riding harnesses on offshore installations;
- Working in a mineshaft.

Activities that are not considered to be work at height include

- Slips and trips on the level;
- Falls on permanent stairs if there is no structural or maintenance work being undertaken;
- Work in, for example, an office on the upper floors of a multi-story building where there is no risk of falling (except activities within the workplace e.g. falling from a stepladder);
- Access and egress to / from a permanent workplace from a staircase.



Other activities that might be work at height but are not covered by these Regulations include

- Activity that is carried out by private individuals, for example in their own homes, even if the equipment has been acquired at work and is being used at height. However anyone employed to do work by a private householder, e.g. trimming hedges, will be subject to these Regulations; and
- Work on ships by the crew under the supervision of the master unless it endangers other people.

The major new requirements of the Working at Height Regulations

The significant changes from older legislation caused by the WAHR are listed below:

- The extension of legislation specific to work at height from the construction industry (under the CHSWR) to all sectors of the economy;
- The requirement in the CHSWR that some measures need only be taken in respect of work above 2metres will disappear;
- The increase in the height of guard rails as specified in the CHSWR from at least 910mm to at least 950mm, to take into account the European Standard of 1000mm on all guard rails, plus or minus 50mm;
- No specific minimum height for toe-boards on working platforms;
- The use of the term 'fragile surface' rather than 'fragile material' in the CHSWR;
- Specific requirements on scaffolding (ref. Part 2, Schedule 3);
- Specific provision for the use of 'collective fall arrest' equipment
- More detailed requirements for personal fall protection system