

Work at height at a glance

Work at Height Regulations 2005

REGULATION 6

The order of measures

Work down the list in order.

1 Avoid

Stay on the ground where the job allows

BEST

2 Prevent

A safe place, or equipment that stops a fall

WORK DOWN THE LIST

3 Minimise

Equipment that limits the fall and its effects

LAST RESORT

Also required

- Collective protection, such as guard-rails, before personal protection, such as a harness
- Construction platforms with a fall of 2 m or more inspected every 7 days
- Equipment inspected at suitable intervals and after exceptional events
- No work at height when the weather puts anyone at risk

ON SITE

Before you go up

Checks for each job, based on the Regulations and HSE guidance.



Planned and supervised

The plan covers rescue.



Weather checked

Wind and wet checked against the plan.



Place checked

Surface sound and guard-rails in place.



Loose items secured

Tools and materials cannot fall.



Workers competent

Or trainees with competent supervision.



Equipment inspected

Last inspection in date and recorded.



Fragile surfaces protected

Avoided or covered, with warning signs.



Area below controlled

Others kept out; area marked.

OFTEN MISREAD

Common mix-ups

Points people often get wrong.

There is no minimum height

The rules apply wherever a fall could injure someone, even into a pit at ground level.

Ladders are allowed

For short, low-risk work where better equipment is not justified.

A harness comes last

Rely on one only where collective measures cannot remove the risk.

Everyone must report

Anyone at work reports any activity or defect likely to endanger someone.

IN PRACTICE

On a lifting job

Based on HSE guidance.

Rooftop plant

Landing a load on a roof puts the crew at an edge. Plan edge protection and access.

Rigging from a MEWP

In a boom MEWP, wear a harness on a short restraint lanyard clipped to the basket anchor.

Lifting people

Lift people in equipment built for it. Anything else is for exceptional cases only.

Under the load

Nobody stands or works under a suspended load.

Source: Work at Height Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/735) and HSE's leaflet INDG401. Applies in Great Britain. Northern Ireland: Work at Height Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, enforced by HSENI and the district councils. **Last reviewed 1 October 2026.** A summary, not the law itself.

