Working at heights toolbox talk

Work at height · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

SITE OR JOB	DATE	PRESENTER

Falling is one of the quickest ways to be killed or crippled on a building site, and on small jobs the danger is usually an open slab edge, a stairwell with no rail or a hole in the floor, not a tall tower. The Construction Regulations treat any place where you could fall from, off or into something as a fall risk, and the contractor must have a plan for it.

SAY THIS

What counts as height

Any place where you can fall from, off or into something is a fall risk. That means the slab edge, an open stairwell, a lift shaft, a hole left for a pipe, the back of a truck and even a deep trench. It does not have to be high to kill you. A short fall onto starter bars or a concrete floor can end a life.

Stop the fall first

Our first choice is always to stop the fall from happening. That means working from the ground where we can, or from a solid platform with guardrails. Guardrails, barricades and covers protect everybody all the time, and nobody has to remember anything. A harness set up to catch a fall only works after you have already fallen, so we rely on one only when a guardrail or platform is not reasonably practicable. The law sets the same order.

Edges, holes and covers

A cover over a hole must be strong enough to stand on, fixed so it cannot slide or be kicked away, and marked so nobody grabs it as a shutter board. If you must take away a rail or a cover to do your job, tell the foreman first and put it back before you walk away. Never leave an edge open just for a minute.

If you wear a harness

Only wear a harness if you have been trained to use it. Check it every time: the straps, the stitching, the buckles, the lanyard and the hook. Clip on only to an anchor point the supervisor has approved, never to a conduit, a loose pipe or a ladder. A harness that is not clipped on does nothing for you.

If someone falls

Our fall protection plan includes a rescue plan. A person hanging in a harness must be brought down quickly, so we do not wait for the ambulance before we act. Shout for help, call the first aider and follow the rescue plan. Do not climb up to help without the right equipment, or there will be two people in trouble.

When to stay down

Do not go up if you feel dizzy, sick or very tired, and tell the foreman why. We do not work on open edges in strong wind or rain. If a guardrail is missing or a cover has moved, stop, keep people away and report it straight away.

CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- ☐ Walk every slab edge and stairwell: are the guardrails complete with no gaps?
- ☐ Are all holes and openings covered, fixed in place and marked?
- ☐ Are the harnesses and lanyards checked, undamaged and stored dry?
- ☐ Does everyone using a harness know which anchor points are approved?
- ☐ Is the fall protection plan with its rescue plan on site, and who is the competent person responsible for it?
- ☐ What is the weather doing, and is it safe to work on edges today?

ASK THE CREW

- ? Where on this site today could someone fall from, off or into something?
- ? If a cover or rail is in your way, what do you do?
- ? If someone was left hanging in a harness, who would do what?
- ? What would make you stop and come down?

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Hard hat · Safety boots with a good grip · Full-body harness and lanyard where the fall protection plan calls for one · Tool lanyards or a tool pouch so tools cannot fall on people below

THE LAW

Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 10: Fall protection; Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 1: Definitions ("fall risk", "fall prevention equipment", "fall arrest equipment"); Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 15: Duty not to interfere with, damage or misuse things. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/working-at-heights/

Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Working at heights

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.