

BRIEFING 07

Working at Height

Falls from height remain the biggest cause of fatal injury in construction. Work at height must be properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people, under the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Hierarchy of control

- Avoid work at height where reasonably practicable.
- Prevent falls using a safe platform with guard rails (scaffold, MEWP, tower).
- Where a fall risk remains, minimise the distance and consequences (nets, airbags, fall arrest).

Before you start

- Use only equipment you are trained and authorised to use.
- Check scaffolds for a current Scafftag / inspection before access.
- Inspect ladders, towers and MEWPs before use; never use damaged equipment.
- Ladders are for short-duration, low-risk work only — maintain three points of contact.
- Keep edges protected and openings covered and marked.

Watch out for

- Fragile surfaces and roof lights — never step on them.
- Dropped objects — use tool tethers and exclusion zones below.
- Overhead services and adverse weather (wind, ice).

STOP & ASK If guard rails are missing or incomplete, or equipment is untagged or damaged, do not access it — report it.