

# History of working at height regulation construction essay



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The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) reports that over 4, 000 employees suffered a major injury because of a fall from height in 2008/09. The majority of injuries were caused by low falls [www. hse. gov](http://www.hse.gov) (see attached appendix)

This figure is still far too high when we consider the working at height regulation 2005 (WHAR) was passed into law almost six years ago.

The reason WHAR became law was the alarming concern across Europe of fatalities and serious injury. The European parliaments passed the directive, wanted all members to implement, and have on their statute books by 2004.

consultation started in the uk in 2001 . there was concerns raised over changes to be made to the 2meter rule, industry claimed they needed this kept as it would not be cost effective and jobs would be lost and certain contracts would not be worth tendering on if this rule was not kept .

Before the regulation, there was various regulations that covered working at height with different rules one of the rules was the 2 meter rule this allowed working up to 2 meters height without any controls accidents. The majority of major injuries were caused by low falls. Again, a significant proportion of these were falls from ladders. [www. hse. gov](http://www.hse.gov) RIDDOR data

It is now recognised in the duty that injury can occur from a fall of any height, not just from above say 2 metres. In addition, falling objects can cause injury from below a drop distance of 2 metres. Therefore guardrails and toe boards etc should be considered based on a suitable and sufficient risk assessment been made

Elizabeth Gibby, Head of the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) Injuries Reduction Programme, said: " In 2003/4 falls from height accounted for 67 fatal accidents at work and nearly 4, 000 major injuries. They remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the biggest causes of major injury. Preventing falls from height is a central part of HSE's Injuries Reduction Programme and these Regulations will provide the cornerstone for this programme to improve standards for work at height and thereby reduce deaths and injuries.

" These Regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height.

She added: " The Regulations cover a wide range of industries and activities but we have developed some simple messages which we want to communicate to all industries. Our key messages are:

those following good practice for work at height now should already be doing enough to comply with these Regulations;

follow the risk assessments you have carried out for work at height activities and make sure all work at height is planned, organized and carried out by competent persons;

follow the hierarchy for managing risks from work at height - take steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks; and

choose the right work equipment and select collective measures to prevent falls (such as guardrails and working platforms) before other measures which

may only mitigate the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or which may only provide personal protection from a fall.”

Falls from height are the biggest work place killer. There were 35 fatalities in 2008/09. A significant proportion of these were falls from ladders. [www. hse. gov](http://www.hse.gov)

Traditionally falls make up the second biggest cause of major accidents. There were over 4500 in 2008/09. The majority of major injuries were caused by low falls. Again, a significant proportion of these were falls from ladders. [www. hse. gov](http://www.hse.gov) RIDDOR data

The Regulations were consulted upon during 2004 including a focused consultation on retaining the requirements for particular precautions for construction work at or above 2mtrs. (I have explained this rule further in legislation section)

Working at Height is now governed by the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR). These regulations revoked the earlier construction regulations, which specified the “ 2 metre rule.” We therefore do not have this threshold.

The WAHR place a duty on the duty holder to avoid work at height where it is reasonably practicable to carry out this work safely otherwise than at height. Where work has to be carried out at height, then the duty holder shall take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

It is recognised in the duty that injury can occur from a fall of any height, not just from above say 2 metres. In addition, falling objects can cause injury <https://assignbuster.com/history-of-working-at-height-regulation-construction-essay/>

from below a drop distance of 2 metres. Therefore guardrails and toe boards etc should be considered based on a suitable and sufficient risk assessment been made

There is no recommended height now. The Regulations have a series of schedules that set out requirements for specific circumstances and schedule two sets out the requirements for guardrails, toe-boards, barriers, and similar collective means of protection.

A link to the regulations is here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/regulations.htm>

All forms of work access equipment for working at height come under the Regulations, which includes hop-ups. More information can be obtained from hse web site on construction and various platforms <http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm>

There was no transitional period as the regulations consolidate what should be existing good practice. However it is understood that industry need to familiarise themselves with the regulations and ensure that what they do is sufficient to comply. Also time to make sure companies do not over react, I have witnessed companies having simply refused stepladders coming on site with the claim HSE has banned them! This is totally UN true and led to total confusion within industry. Still does today.

There is Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) produced for the Regulations and hse have produced INGD 401 and other literature for further guidance. Free

download, is available from [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk). In addition, working at height comes under other regulations i. e.

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 (HASAWA)

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR)

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER 98)

Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)

HSE took a different approach to communicate the Regulations. This was based on A Brief Guide to the Regulations and promoting sector specific guidance. The hse ran media awareness campaigns to highlight the introduction of the new regulation and to make people aware that a fall from any height can be fatal this was called shattered lives this can be viewed on line [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) I have examined statistics correlated by the health and safety executive reporting of injuries diseases dangerous occurrences (RIDDOR). Who have compiled a large amount of data on falls from height and it lays out the different types of falls and there consequences on the individual both physically and on their future employment within the industry. The full report is Attached (see appendix 2) but I have bullet pointed the main aspects concerning my report

High falls (a fall from a height of at least 2 meters)

(Low falls a fall from a height below 2 meters)

(Unspecified height)

The pie charts below show the breakdown of fatal, major, and over-3-day fall injuries by height of fall and whether the injured person fell from a ladder or something else. Typically, more than 70% of fatal fall injuries are from a height of more than two metres compared with 23% of major fall injuries and just 10% of over-3-day fall injuries. In each category, between 20% and 30% of the accidents reported are normally from ladders. In 2008/09, the proportion of injuries attributable to high falls fell to 15% of major fall injuries and just 5% of over-3-day fall injuries. This is because of the significant increase in the proportion of low and unspecified falls due to the reclassification of slips and trips on stairs as falls. Source (Injury analysis - priority programmes: falls from height RIDDOR) [www.hse.gov](http://www.hse.gov)

**Fatal fall injuries to workers, 2008/09p**

**Major fall injuries to workers, 2008/09p**

**Over 3 day fall injuries to workers, 2008/09p**

**Source [www.hse.gov](http://www.hse.gov). uk**