

WORKING AT HEIGHTS IN CONSTRUCTION

Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2012 (SA)*, certain people have health and safety duties with which they must comply in relation to undertaking construction work.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS?

This fact sheet should be read by 'persons conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBUs) that carry out construction work where there is a risk of a person falling that is reasonably likely to cause injury to the person or any other person.

DUTY TO MANAGE RISKS OF FALLS AT ANY HEIGHT

The *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (SA)* apply to a fall by a person from one level to another rather than specifically to a fall from heights.

The PCBU must provide a safe means of access and egress to and from the workplace and any area that involves the risk of a fall.

The PCBU must also ensure that any work that involves the risk of a fall is carried out on the ground or on a solid construction so far as is reasonably practicable.

If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk of a fall at a construction site, then the PCBU must minimise the risk of a fall by providing adequate protection against the risk.

Adequate protection means providing and maintaining a safe system of work (administrative controls), and:

- providing a fall prevention device, which could include a secure fence, edge protection, working platforms and covers;
- if it is not reasonably practicable to provide a fall prevention device, providing a work positioning system; and
- if it is not reasonably practicable to comply with either of the above, then providing a fall arrest system.

If a fall arrest system is used as a control risk then emergency and rescue procedures must be established in relation to the use of the system.

A safe system of work could include:

- providing temporary work platforms;
- providing training in relation to the risks involved in work at the workplace; or
- providing safe work procedures, safe sequencing of work, safe use of ladders, permit systems and appropriate signs.

A combination of controls may be used to minimise risks, so far as is practicable if a single control is not sufficient for the purpose.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR RISKS OF FALLS GREATER THAN THREE METRES

A PCBU must ensure a Safe Work Method Statement is prepared for high risk construction work that involves a risk of a person falling more than three metres before the work commences (refer to the fact sheet 'Safe Work Method Statements for High Risk Construction Work').

In the event that the only appropriate way of managing the risk of a fall greater than three metres is through administrative controls and the use of personal protective equipment, the Safe Work Method Statement must describe each of the control measures that were considered in reaching this decision.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

For further information refer to SafeWork SA fact sheet 'Transitional Arrangements for Construction Work'.

Important

This information provides guidance on work health and safety matters. It may refer to legislation that has been amended or repealed and should not be taken as a statement of law. To ensure compliance with your legal obligations, you should always refer to the current Work Health and Safety Act and Regulations.