



BEST PRACTICE GUIDE TO WORKING SAFELY AT HEIGHT

HOW TO DEPLOY LEACH'S STRICTPLAAN SAFETY MODEL



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1. INTRODUCTION

ON TOO MANY OCCASIONS IN RECENT YEARS OUR INDUSTRY HAS HIT THE HEADLINES FOR ALL THE WRONG REASONS.

An injury or death on-site is something we work incredibly hard to prevent; but the signs are worrying. The latest figures from Health and Safety Executive (HSE) highlight an increase in deaths within the construction industry over the last year, with falls from height accounting for almost one third of fatal injuries . Something needs to be done.

According to the Working at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR), working at height refers to:

“Work in any place, including a place at or below ground level, or obtaining access to or egress from such a place, while at work, except by a staircase, where, if suitable measures were not taken, a person could fall a distance likely to cause personal injury.”



Working at Height Regulations 2005

So, working at height refers to any work conducted whereby a fall from distance could cause personal injury. There is always an element of risk attached to working at height. Perhaps accidents are even inevitable from time to time. However, we truly believe that with sound preparation, thorough planning, relevant training, and the right tools, we can keep accidents and injury to an absolute minimum.

It is our aim to help industry completely eradicate injuries or deaths on-site. Yes, we know it’s a bold statement. But if no stone is left un-turned in the desire to keep workers safe, we will be in a good position to ensure all workers can carry out their work safely.

In this best-practice guide, we will share our **STRICTPLAAN** model and take you through the necessary steps to ensure you and your team stay safe when working at height.

We hope it proves a useful read.

This marketing brochure cannot and should not replace working at height health and safety advice from a qualified professional.

The health and safety information is provided for general informational and educational purposes only and is not a substitute for professional advice.

Accordingly, before taking any actions based upon such information, we encourage you to consult with the appropriate professionals. We do not provide any kind of health and safety advice. The use or reliance of any information contained in this brochure is solely at your own risk and Leach’s will not be liable for any losses and/or damages in connection with the use of this brochure or its content.

2. STRICTPLAN

LEACH'S GUIDE TO SAFE WORKING AT HEIGHT

S	SCENARIO - EVALUATE THE SCENARIO
TR	THREATS & RISKS - UNDERSTAND THE THREATS & RISKS
I	INSTIGATE - PROPER PLANNING
C	COMPETENCIES - EVALUATE WORKER COMPETENCIES
T	TRAINING - ENSURE THOROUGH TRAINING
P	PPE - CHOOSE QUALITY PPE & HEIGHT SAFETY TOOLS
L	LOOK - LOOK AT YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE EACH USE
A	ACTIONABLE - CREATE AN ACTIONABLE EMERGENCY & EVACUATION PLAN
A	ASSURE - REGULATORY COMPLIANCE
N	NEVER - GET COMPLACENT



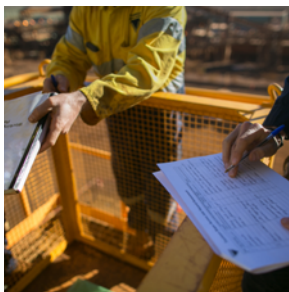
2.1 EVALUATE THE SCENARIO

One of the most important steps to take before undertaking any work at height is asking the question... **“Do I need to?”**

That is because the simplest and most effective way to avoid falls and injuries at height is not working at height. So, before you start climbing, closely evaluate the scenario to determine if it is absolutely necessary.

In the first instance, we always recommend undertaking as much work as possible from ground level. Whether you're trimming trees, window cleaning or painting, there are many tools to help you do this with both feet on the ground.

So, don't forget to ask yourself the question: **“Do I need to work at height?”**.



2.2 UNDERSTAND THE THREATS & RISKS

Now you've determined the job you need to do requires working at height.

Before undertaking any work, an employer or site owner should identify all the health and safety risks workers could face. This can be achieved by conducting a full and thorough risk-assessment.

Being aware of the risks and understanding how they can cause accidents or injury is the only way to eradicate them.

We advise employers to create and deploy a formal procedure, ensuring a risk-assessment

is clearly defined, documented and all the relevant safety procedures are adhered to by those working at height.

If you will be working at height, be sure to check that a risk-assessment has been completed and you fully understand the protocols that have been put in place to keep you safe.

Don't be afraid to use your own experiences and add anything you feel of importance that has been omitted. A good risk-assessment should be a collaborative process with all those working at height able to contribute.

2.3 INSTIGATE PROPER PLANNING

Now you're aware of the risks, it's time to put a strict plan in place.

Any work at height requires compliance with the WAHR 2005. It is the duty of the employer, self-employed, or any person who controls the site or work of others, to create clearly-defined safety measures that prevent the risk of personal injury.

This is often referred to as a method statement. It must include:

Scope of the project	Site maintenance and storage
Means of access, such as scaffolding or lifting cage	PPE required and instructions for use
Lighting details	Power requirements
Plant and equipment required	Working at height requirements
Materials or substances used that could be hazardous or flammable	Third party protection
Pre-determined risks and their controls	Emergency and rescue provisions
Training provided	How this method statement will be communicated with the workforce
Supervision required	

According to HSE, the below must also be considered when planning work:



- Could weather conditions put worker safety at risk?
- Is the place where work is scheduled to be undertaken safe? Every location must be thoroughly checked for hazards before any work is started.
- How can we prevent materials or objects from falling?
- If that isn't possible, what measures can we put in place to ensure others aren't put at risk? For example, exclusion zones, netting or no access areas.
- Is all of our equipment stored safely so it cannot cause injury if disturbed?
- Has all of the equipment been properly tested and deemed safe to use?

2.4 EVALUATE WORKER COMPETENCIES

Everyone working at height must have the relevant skills, knowledge, ability and experience to do so. This is called worker competency. Asking a tradesperson without the right skills to work at height is an accident waiting to happen.

Experience and competency is critical. It helps those in dangerous environments recognise the risks before an accident occurs, so they can use their knowledge to mitigate that threat.

But how do you decide if someone is competent to work at height?

According to the HSE, in the case of low-risk, short duration tasks (less than 30 minutes) involving ladders, competence requirements may be no more than on or off-site instruction and training to use to equipment safely.

More technical levels of competence are required if, for example, you are planning to erect a large and complicated scaffold structure. This would need official and certified training. Whatever the scenario, we recommend thorough training for every member of staff that is involved in the working at height process.



2.5 ENSURE THOROUGH TRAINING

Effective training doesn't just protect those working at height, but also the people around them. A dropped tool could cause some serious injury to a worker or pedestrian below if the right measures aren't in place. Proper training will help protect the entire team.

A large amount of on-site work is conducted at height, with various means of access available. From mobile ladders and scaffolds to personal suspension equipment and lifting cages, it's important to ensure the training provided is

relevant to the means of access you are planning to use, or lives could be put at risk.

Although not everyone on a construction site is asked to work at height, we recommend giving as many workers the opportunity to train as possible. If it's likely they'll be asked to help with a job, even when it isn't their core expertise, they need to be confident to deliver. It is best-practice to ensure every staff member who may be called upon for support is properly trained.

2.6 CHOOSE QUALITY PPE & HEIGHT SAFETY TOOLS

There's nothing more important to your health and safety when working at height than utilising the right equipment and protection. But protection itself isn't always enough...

Is your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) best-in-class? Does it comply with the latest regulations?

It's easy to get caught out by equipment when the price tag tempts, but there are two risks attached to this procurement approach:

1. It may break, and you could find yourself making many repeat purchases which will cost you more in the long run.
2. If it does break, buying more equipment might be the least of your concerns. What if a member of your team was injured in the process?

When workers' wellbeing is at stake, quality PPE can make all the difference. From harnesses and helmets to footwear and glasses, there's nothing more important than good PPE to protect your team.

2.7 LOOK AND TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE EACH USE

Now you're one step ahead and you have the best PPE and safety equipment available on the market, but when was the last time you had a really good look at it?

It's good practice for all PPE and height safety equipment that you conduct visual inspections before each use. That helmet you've been wearing for 5 years may've been the best available at the time, but is it still in good shape now? Check before you put it on again.

Always make sure your equipment is fit-for-purpose before use.

Further to that, the BS EN 365: 2004 Personal protective equipment against falls from height standard instructs users of fall arrest equipment to re-certify equipment on a 12-monthly inspection. Some textile webbing products may need to be tested every 6-months at least, or every 3-months if being used in arduous conditions.

The re-certification process must be undertaken by a qualified professional (competent person) and should include:

- A description of the product
- The frequency and type of inspection
- Who is authorised to conduct the inspection
- The actions that should be taken if the test fails
- The means of recording inspections
- The training of users
- The means of monitoring to verify the inspections



2.8 HAVE AN ACTIONABLE EMERGENCY EVACUATION & RESCUE PLAN

While you should make every effort to reduce all risks when working at height, unfortunately accidents can still occur. You must have an easy-to-action, well-drilled emergency evacuation and rescue plan ready.

A plan should include an agreed and firmly set procedure for evacuations and rescues. Make sure you and your team know exactly what could go wrong and practice what to do in those situations. You can't just rely on the emergency services to conduct an evacuation or rescue.

A well-drilled, actionable plan should:

- Include a thorough risk-assessment
- Utilise high-quality PPE
- Document a detailed rescue procedure
- Give details of the height safety and fall arrest equipment you will need, and instructions on how to properly use
- Identify the anchor points where needed
- Highlight the limitations of the rescue plan depending on uncontrollable scenarios (such as weather)
- Advise who to alert in case of an emergency
- Highlight what to do in case of a medical emergency such as prolonged suspension
- Give instructions on how often and how-to maintain safety equipment
- Advise on what rescue training should entail and how often it should take place
- Include regular plan reviews

2.9 ASSURE REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Good awareness of all the relevant legislation and regulations that exist to mitigate against any risks is essential.

If you or your employees are working at height, you will need to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005. These regulations apply to an employer or if you control work at height (contractor or factory owner).

Any work at height must be properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people with measures in place to protect everyone at risk. Non-compliance with the relevant legislations could result in:

- You and your team being at risk of injury due to poor safety practices
- Potential fines and site closures

2.10 NEVER GET COMPLACENT

Train, train and then train again. Never get complacent. It isn't a one-time thing. Training gives confidence, increases knowledge, and upskills tradespersons so they can carry out their

work effectively with minimal risk. Training is one of the most important tools to prevent injuries on-site. A worker must be confident using the tools at their disposal.



3. CONCLUSION

AT LEACH'S, OUR AIM IS SIMPLE.

We want to ensure all workers are able to carry out their role in as safe an environment as possible.

It's a plain truth that working at height represents one of the greatest risks for those on-site. We believe that our **STRICTPLAAN** model provides a strong framework for businesses and employees to follow to ensure all workers get home safely.

Leave no stone un-turned. Be sure to understand the risks; conduct proper planning; implement effective training, procure high-quality PPE and safety equipment; and comply with all relevant legislation. Not doing so puts all on-site workers at risk.

So now is the time to ask yourself... Do you need to review your height safety practices?





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Acknowledgement

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