

Health and Safety Bulletin

Articles in this newsletter:

- Falls from height
- World COPD day
- Case law update
- Recall of 3M earmuffs
- HSE mail scam

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Falls from height

There was a significant increase in the number of fatalities associated with falls from height in 2024. The annual average between 2019 and 2024 was 37, but the number of fatalities recorded in 2023-24 was 50 – this accounted for 36% of the total number of fatalities reported and is a 40% increase on the number of average fatalities reported. In this bulletin we are focusing on the steps we can follow to reduce fall from height risks.

What is the definition of work at height?

Work at height is defined by the HSE in their guidance INDG401 ([Working at height: A brief guide \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/working-at-height/)) as work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. To clarify, this means that working at height risks are not triggered by a particular type of work or the distance someone could fall, but the potential consequences of a fall.

What steps do we need to follow to minimize the risk of falling from height?

INDG401 contains a practical flowchart explaining how work at height risks should be managed:-

- Step 1: avoid work at height – this requires consideration of alternative methods of doing the work, for example, lowering the items that needs to be accessed to ground level, or using extended tools that allow the worker to stand on the ground but still carry out the work
- Step 2: prevent the fall (we think this is better described as reducing the risk of a fall) – by choosing the right access method – preferably using a permanent platform, but if one is not available, choosing the safest means of access (e.g. a scaffold or a MEWP before a ladder or stepladder)
- Step 3: minimize the distance and/or consequence of a fall – this is where additional controls such as temporary handrails, safety nets, harnesses and lanyards are used



Many organizations also have safe systems of work to check the conditions before allowing non-routine work at height e.g. other activities in the area, weather conditions, etc.

Conclusion

Following publication of the recent statistics, the HSE are likely to be focusing on work at height, trying to identify where risks can be reduced, but also where there is non-compliance with the Work at Height Regulations.

However, these statistics should also be a reminder that some work can become so routine that our perception of the risk may not reflect current conditions, or that our methods can alter to include fall from height risks without us realizing.

Recently issued health and safety information:

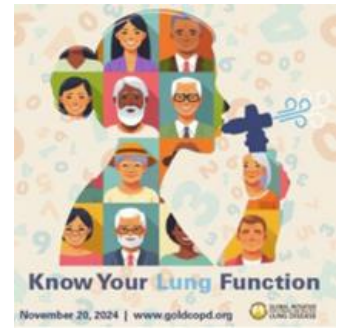
- Wellbeing Strategies: Effective in Managing Sickness Absence? Insights and Recommendations for Employers: [Wellbeing-Strategies-Effective-in-Managing-Sickness-Absence-Insights-and-Recommendations-for-Employers.pdf \(wslaw.co.uk\)](https://www.wslaw.co.uk/wellbeing-strategies-effective-in-managing-sickness-absence-insights-and-recommendations-for-employers.pdf)
- Posture guidance for DSE use: [Posture Guidance A4 2pp 1023 v4.in dd \(shopify.com\)](https://shopify.com/posture-guidance-a4-2pp-1023-v4-in-dd)
- Ultimate guide to towers and low level access equipment: [Ultimate guide to towers and low level access equipment - PASMA](https://shopify.com/ultimate-guide-to-towers-and-low-level-access-equipment-pasma)
- Guidance notes and application for a licence to assemble and use a mobile tower or prefabricated tower scaffold on the highway: [Scaffold-Tower-Pavement-Licence-Guidance-Revised-November-2023-Final.pdf \(pasma.co.uk\)](https://shopify.com/scaffold-tower-pavement-licence-guidance-revised-november-2023-final.pdf)

World COPD day

November 20th is World COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder) day. The topic for 2024 is “know your lung function,” with the focus on measuring lung function (spirometry).

COPD can be caused by exposure to industrial materials as well as air pollution and respiratory infections and measuring lung function can not only predict lung health but is also a good indicator of our overall health.

GOLD (<https://goldcopd.org/>) coordinates the day and distributes resources to publicize it.



Case Law update

This issue focuses on cases that involve falls from height

A company in Wales was fined **£60,000** with **£8,093** costs after a joiner fell from height and suffered a kidney laceration and head trauma. The injured person fell 2.44 meters while using a mobile working platform with an unprotected edge because the platform's end gates had been taped open. The HSE's investigation found that none of the employees had received information or training on the safe use of towers

A company and its director were sentenced after an employee fell from height and suffered a wrist, elbow, left arm and pelvis fractures after falling approximately three meters from a ladder. The HSE's investigation concluded that a platform would have been a safer means of access. The company was fined **£6,000** with **£2,000** costs and the Director was given a **12 month community order** with **£1,000** costs

A transport and haulage company was fined **£200,000** plus **£15,322** costs after a worker, who was unloading goods from a shipping

container, fell out of the rear of the container and died as a result

A sub-contractor died after his head struck a metal lintel while he was operating a MEWP. He was driving the MEWP along a hospital corridor, but the lead contractor had failed to consider overhead obstructions in the risk assessment. The lead contractor was fined **£135,000** with **£10,125** costs.

A family-owned farming business was fined **£40,000** after an employee fell approximately 3m from a potato box that had been lifted by a forklift truck and suffered serious head injuries

About Clwyd Associates...

We are a management consultancy, focusing on health and safety, and SAP based in the Midlands.

In business since 2000, we employ consultants with at least 15 years practical experience backed up by recognized professional and academic qualifications - ensuring our clients receive first class service.



Recall of 3M ear muffs

3M Peltor X4 ear muffs manufactured between March 2020 and September 2022 have been recalled because of the risk of them developing cracks on the exterior surface of the cups ([Stop Use and Recall Notification: 3M™ PELTOR™ X4 Series Earmuffs](#)).

Mail scam: Electricity at Work Regulations

The HSE has received reports that scam letters are being sent to organizations purporting to have come from the HSE's Merseyside office.

The letters include penalty notices and request payment.

The HSE are encouraging those who receive the letters to report them to Royal Mail.



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