

Working at Heights

Relevant Legislation and Documents

Regulation 21 of Health & Safety in Employment Regulations 1995

ASNZ 1891 Industrial Fall Arrest Systems and Devices Part 1 – 4

ASNZS 4488 1997 Industrial Rope Access Systems 1&2

OSH Guidelines for prevention of falls

Careful risk management strategies must be made for circumstances involving working at heights and for those working underneath operations being undertaken at heights. This must include planning should the need arise for retrieval of a person who has fallen from an elevated structure, especially if this person is unconscious, in which case you may have only 10 minutes to retrieve this person.

- Specifically, you must wear a fall arrest system and device where specified.
- All harnesses, lanyards, fall arrest and fall restraint devices must be manufactured and maintained to NZ Standards.
- When using inertia reel devices, do not work at more than 30 degrees from the vertical where a fall will create a pendulum effect injury.
- Safe access must be provided for all work platforms more than 1.8 m high.

Note: No person should be allowed to undertake work requiring the use of fall restraint or fall arrest devices without having undertaken appropriate training in the use and maintenance of such devices. A high level rescue plan should also be in place and well documented. NZQA 15757 approved courses are the only accepted evidence by OSH of competence based training.

General Guidelines

- 1) No person should enter or exit the stage area when anyone is working at heights without the express permission of the relevant Supervisor, e.g.: Head Mechanist, Production Manager, Technical Director or other.
- 2) Warning signs must be clear, unobstructed and in conspicuous places.
- 3) When working at heights, only essential tools and equipment should be used.
- 4) Prior to ascending, all tools should be secured with lanyards to prevent them falling on those below and pockets must be empty.
- 5) Vision must not be impaired when working or performing at heights.
- 6) Where there is the potential for a person to be injured from a fall, appropriate fall protection must be used.
- 7) Ensure all ascent/descent of ladders is performed facing the ladder and that you grasp the sides and not the rungs.
- 8) Communication systems must be established between those at height and those on the ground.
- 9) Do not work to the sides of ladders or guard railings at height.

- 10) Appropriate footwear must be worn to minimise the risk of slipping; appropriate clothing must be worn to minimise the risk of snagging; hair should be tied back at all times.
- 11) When working at height on elevated truss or other such structure, a safety wire should always be rigged to allow the person working at height to be able to attach to, in order to safely undertake the tasks required. The safety harness worn must be in accordance with the relevant NZ Standards.
- 12) Use a lanyard that is appropriate for the height at which you are working (for guidance see ASNZS 1891 part 4 figure 7.1).
- 13) Be aware of the potential risk ultra violet exposure may have on all harnesses and slings.
- 14) All floor openings must be guarded by a cover or guardrail on open sides, when not in use in rehearsal or performance situations.
- 15) All platforms above 3m in height that are to be used and could result in a fall a risk assessment must be undertaken and safety guards or a fall prevention system for those using the said platform should be the first options if practicable.
- 16) If guardrails are impracticable, there should be other mechanisms for at least warning of the potential hazard of falling, such as tape markings.
- 17) Walking on open beams or sliding down beams that are over 3m high must be done only with appropriate safety harnesses and lanyard.