SAFE WORKING AT HEIGHT - TOOL BOX TALK

KEY POINTS

- Falls from height is the most common cause of fatal injuries whilst at work.
- Over the last 5 years, 40% of all work-related deaths were caused by falls from height.
- In 2016/2017, there were 25 work related deaths reported to the HSE.
- It is estimated that 2/3 of all major injuries are caused by 'low falls' (below 2mtrs)
- Significant proportion down to falls from ladders

WHAT IS WORKING AT HEIGHT?

- Work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury

Includes:

- Access and egress (scaffold / ladders)
- Work at or below ground level
- NOT stairways or slips / trips

TYPICAL WORKPLACE EXAMPLES

- Working on a scaffold or MEWP
- Working on the back of a lorry
- Using cradles or ropes to gain access
- Climbing permanent structures such as gantries
- Working close to excavations, cellars or other openings.
- Working on fragile roofing
- Working on a ladder
- Staging or trestles (concerts filming etc)

HIERARCHY FOR WORKING AT HEIGHT

Avoid work at height:

- if you don't have to go up there DON'T!
- Use extendable tools
- Lowering the object to ground level
- Ground assembly

Prevent falls:

- use an existing place or means of access (non-fragile roof with permanent guard rail)
- Use the most suitable way of working (MEWP, scaffold)
- Select the most suitable equipment (work restraint to prevent a fall)

Minimise the distance and consequences:

- Minimise the consequences (Air Bags, Nets etc)
- Take other measures to prevent injury e.g. instruction, information and training

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO?

- Carry out as much work from the ground as possible
- Ensure workers can get safely to and from their working at height location
- Ensure equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job (maintained / inspected)
- Don't overload or overreach
- Take precautions when working at height
- Provide protection from falling objects
- Consider emergency evacuation and rescue procedures

LADDERS AND STEPS

- Cost UK economy £60 million a year
- Average 14 deaths a year

WHAT IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF ACCIDENTS?

- Ladder slips or falls due to overreaching
- Ladders not secured properly
- Ladder is in a poor state

WHEN SHOULD YOU USE LADDERS/STEPS?

Risk assessment must justify use;

- Low risk,
- Short duration, 30 mins or less,
- Or Site conditions dictate
- Follow good practice

WHEN SHOULD PRE-USE CHECKS BE COMPLETED?

- By the user
- At the beginning of the working day
- After something has changed (dropped etc)

WHAT PRE-USE CHECKS SHOULD BE COMPLETED?

- Stiles
- Feet
- Rungs
- Locking mechanisms
- Platform
- Steps / treads
- Cracked / damaged welded joints, loose rivets or damaged stays

SAFELY WORKING ON LADDERS

- Access or short term
- Always check the condition
- Set ladders at 75^0 (1 in 4)
- Tied at the top / footed
- Lashed at mid-point if over 6 meters long
- Set on a firm base
- Clear of excavations
- Should not be in the way of other operations
- Always grip and face the ladder – (Don't slide down the stiles)
- Extend at least 1 m above its landing point (3 rungs)
- Secured by the stiles not the rungs
- Do not paint wooden ladders
- Do not overload the ladder
- Do not overreach
- Always maintain 3 points of contact
- Never jump a ladder to re-position it
- Never carry tools or equipment when climbing a ladder (use tool belt)
- When using aluminium ladders beware of electric cables
- Do not work within 6m overhead power lines

Safely working on steps

- Risk assessment

- Short duration only
- Correct grade
- Do not overreach
- Do not stand on top three steps unless suitable handhold
- Good condition
- Level ground (feet in contact with ground)
- Locking devices engaged
- Work face on, not side on
- 3 points of contact

Note to Supervisor: Now inform your workforce of the Company Policy regarding working at height.