

# SAFETY BULLETIN

03/11

## WORK AT HEIGHT

Construction remains a high-risk industry with the highest rate of fatal accidents of all the main industrial sectors in the UK.

Falls from height and falling objects account for a significant number of these accidents.

The schedule of fatal accidents in construction during 2010 at the end of this bulletin makes depressing reading.

For Interserve Project Services, 30% of our RIDDOR accidents were due to falls from height in 2010. This is a steep increase on previous years (2009 - 14%) and the most fall from height accidents in a year since 2005.

This should be of great concern to all of us. A significant number could have resulted in a fatal injury, such as the incident shown on the photo underneath.



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Whilst we should all know the hierarchy of working at height, given our recent experiences, it's appropriate to take a moment to remind ourselves of the principles, as detailed below.

PRINCIPLES	HIERARCHY <small>(Only move down the hierarchy if it is not reasonably practicable to provide protection indicated)</small>	EXAMPLES
ELIMINATE THE RISK	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Avoid if possible; if not possible to avoid, then</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div>	
STOP PEOPLE FALLING	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Undertaken from a working platform that gives collective protection</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div>	Scaffolds, mobile elevated work platforms, etc
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Undertaken using methods that give individual protection</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div>	Harness and lanyards used as work restraint*
REDUCE CONSEQUENCES TO THOSE WHO HAVE ALREADY FALLEN	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Provide collective fall arrest</div> <div style="text-align: center;">↓</div>	Netting, air bags, etc
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Provide individual fall arrest</div>	Harnesses and lanyards used as fall arrest*

\* Work Restraint: Prevents the user from getting into a position where they could potentially fall  
 \* Fall Arrest: Lanyard incorporates shock absorber, prevents falling people hitting ground. Only effective if sufficient clearance - must have emergency procedures in place to recover individual quickly

Even when planned in accordance with this hierarchy, the safety of those involved in and around the activity is wholly reliant on people following the planned method of work, using equipment properly and not abusing the equipment.

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In our more significant fall from height incidents in 2010, a common theme was methods of work not being followed, or equipment being abused.

Clearly the competence of those using and supervising these activities is key and individuals, including supervisors, have to be held to account where necessary.

When considering work at height access equipment, some types are easier to abuse than others.

Mobile aluminium towers are possibly the most common mobile access equipment on our sites. They are also possibly the most abused, frequently incorrectly built and often modified to make them unsafe.

Examples would include removing handrails to work around cable trays, jacking up the caster adjustment to gain extra height, etc.



Alternatively, the single person “pop-up” type of platform is far less likely to be abused, with its infinitely adjustable platform height.

**We should never forget the potential consequences of fall from height incidents. Nobody thinks it’s going to happen to them.**

**No doubt those on the following schedule thought the same.**

**WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FATALLY INJURED IN 2009/2010**

*Source: HSE Website*

Date of Incident	Age	Description of Incident	Location of Incident	General Industry Sector	Detailed Standard Industry Classification (SIC)	Employment Status
26/11/09	37	Deceased fell from height	London	Construction	Construction	Self-Employed
13/01/10	48	Deceased fell from height	Barry	Construction	Construction	Self-Employed
09/02/10	26	Deceased was crushed by stonework	Oxford	Construction	Construction	Employee
11/02/10	34	Deceased was crushed by concrete panels	Hampshire	Construction	Other building installation	Employee
12/02/10	46	Deceased was struck by a vehicle	Rutland	Construction	Construction of highways, roads, airfields and sport facilities	Employee
17/02/10	62	Deceased fell from height	Northumberland	Construction	Construction of domestic buildings	Employee
26/02/10	27	Deceased fell from height	Lincolnshire	Construction	Construction of domestic buildings	Self-Employed
08/03/10	66	Deceased fell from height	Leicestershire	Construction	Erection of roof covering and frames	Employee
06/04/10	51	Deceased fell from height	Norfolk	Construction	Construction of civil engineering constructions	Employee
14/04/10	32	Deceased became trapped when a trench collapsed	Morecambe	Construction	Construction of civil engineering constructions	Self-Employed
07/05/10	19	Deceased was trapped by a vehicle	Cumbria	Construction	Construction	Employee
11/05/10	26	Deceased came into contact with overhead electrical cables	North Yorkshire	Construction	Other construction work involving special trades	Employee
20/05/10	39	Deceased was struck by a falling object	Staffordshire	Construction	Demolition and wrecking of buildings; earth moving	Self-Employed
09/06/10	50	Deceased died from electrocution	Essex	Construction	Construction of civil engineering constructions	Employee

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Date of Incident	Age	Description of Incident	Location of Incident	General Industry Sector	Detailed Standard Industry Classification (SIC)	Employment Status
16/06/10	26	Deceased was crushed by a vehicle	Lancashire	Construction	Construction of commercial buildings	Employee
21/06/10	38	Deceased fell from height	Wiltshire	Construction	Construction of civil engineering constructions	Employee
23/06/10	38	Deceased died when he became trapped between machinery and an overhead structure	Northamptonshire	Construction	Floor and wall covering	Employee
24/06/10	18	Deceased died after his work vehicle was struck by a heavy goods vehicle	Yorkshire	Construction	Construction of highways, roads, airfields and sport facilities	Employee
28/06/10	6	Deceased died after becoming trapped by an automated gate	Manchester	Construction	Construction	Member of the Public
23/07/10	18	Deceased fell from height	Northumberland	Construction	Construction of commercial buildings	Employee
27/07/10	45	Deceased was hit by a reversing vehicle	Preston	Construction	Other building completion	Employee
05/08/10	62	Deceased fell from height	Rotherham	Construction	Installation of electrical wiring and fittings	Self-Employed
10/08/10	56	Deceased was electrocuted	Haywards Heath	Construction	Construction of commercial buildings	Employee
10/08/10	79	Deceased fell from height	Welshpool	Construction	Erection of roof covering and frames	Self-Employed
18/08/10	38	Deceased was struck by a moving vehicle	Membury, Berkshire	Construction	Other building installation	Employee
21/08/10	55	Deceased fell from height	Southall	Construction	Construction of commercial buildings	Self-Employed
26/08/10	37	Deceased was crushed by an overturned vehicle	Leven	Construction	Other construction work	Employed by other
03/09/10	61	Deceased fell from height	Durham	Construction	Other construction work involving special trades	Self-Employed

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Date of Incident	Age	Description of Incident	Location of Incident	General Industry Sector	Detailed Standard Industry Classification (SIC)	Employment Status
22/09/10	26	Deceased was struck by a moving object	London	Construction	Other building installation	Employee
30/09/10	50	Deceased was crushed in a collapsed excavation	London	Construction	Other construction work involving special trades	Self-Employed
11/10/10	63	Deceased fell from height	Midlands	Construction	Construction	Self-Employed
16/10/10	27	Deceased was electrocuted	Hounslow	Construction	Electrical installation works	Employee
18/10/10	23	Deceased was trapped in a collapsing trench	Bradford	Construction	Construction	Self-Employed
20/10/10	28	Deceased was struck by a reversing vehicle	Essex	Construction	Construction	Employee
21/10/10	58	Deceased was struck by a falling object	Suffolk	Construction	Construction	Employed by other
21/10/10	19	Deceased was struck by a falling object	Suffolk	Construction	Construction	Employed by other
22/10/10	57	Deceased fell from height	Ilkeston	Construction	Construction	Employee
09/11/10	64	Deceased was struck by a vehicle	Reading	Construction	Construction	Employee
24/11/10	50	Deceased died after being struck by a moving vehicle	Kent	Construction	Renting of construction or demolition equipment with operator	Self-Employed
02/12/10	35	Deceased was struck by collapsing excavation	London	Construction	Construction	Employee
13/12/10	22	Deceased died from suspected carbon monoxide poisoning	Macclesfield	Construction	Plumbing	Employee
29/12/10	36	Deceased fell from height	Staffordshire	Construction	Construction	Self-Employed