

Information Sheet

**Purpose**

The following frequently asked questions will assist Schools/Branches to manage the hazards associated with work where there is the potential to fall from one level to another where it is reasonably likely to cause injury in accordance with the [Hazard Management](#) chapter of the HSW Handbook and the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) Part 4.

**Q1 Is there a height specification relating to this legislative requirement?**

There is no height specification.

The [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) Part 4 requires a hazard management approach to any activity which could result in a fall from one level to another regardless of the height, where it is reasonably likely to cause injury to the person or any other person.

The legislation requires consideration of the work environment and any activity where a person could fall:

- from an elevated workplace; or
- in the vicinity of an opening; or
- in the vicinity of an edge; or
- through a surface; or
- from any other place.

It should be noted that where an activity relates to construction work and the worker could potentially fall more than 3 metres, there are additional legislative requirements to be met, in accordance with the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) section 291. If you are unsure if your activity fits within the definition of construction work refer to the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) section 289.

**Q2 What specific requirements are to be addressed in order to meet the WHS Regulations 2012 (SA) for the management of the risk of a fall?**

1. Where it is reasonably practicable, the work is to be carried out on the ground or on a solid construction.

Solid construction means an area that has:

- A surface that is structurally capable of supporting all persons and things that may be located or placed on it; and
- Barriers around its perimeter and any openings to prevent a fall; and
- An even and readily negotiable surface and gradient; and
- A safe means of entry and exit.

2. Where it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate the risk of a fall, as outlined above, then the worker is to be provided with adequate protection and a safe system of work.

Protection is to include:

- Provision of fall prevention devices if it is reasonably practicable to do so (i.e. a secure fence; and edge protection; and working platforms; and covers); or
- Provision of a work positioning system (i.e. any plant or structure, other than a temporary work platform, that enables a person to be positioned and safely supported at a location for the duration of the relevant work being carried out.); or

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**Q2 What specific requirements are to be addressed in order to meet the WHS Regulations 2012 (SA) for the management of the risk of a fall? Continued**

A safe system to work at height could include:

- Providing temporary work platforms;
- Providing training in relation to the risks involved in work at the workplace;
- Providing safe work procedures, safe sequencing of work, safe use of ladders, permit systems and appropriate signs.

Where it is not reasonably practicable to comply with the two options above, then the provision of a fall arrest system. (i.e. plant or material designed to arrest a fall such as an industrial safety net, a catch platform, a safety harness system other than a system that relies entirely on a restraint technique system).

A combination of the controls set out may be used to minimise risks so far as is practicable if a single control is not sufficient for the purpose.

**Emergency and rescue procedures**

Where a fall arrest system is a control measure, emergency procedures must be established, including rescue procedures in relation to the use of the fall arrest system. These procedures must be tested so that they are effective and relevant workers must be provided with suitable and adequate information, training and instruction in relation to the emergency procedures.

**High risk construction work and a fall of greater than 3 metres.**

A Safe Work Method Statement is to be prepared in accordance with [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) Section 299.

(Construction work means any work carried out in connection with the construction, alteration, conversion, fitting-out, commission, renovation, repair, maintenance, refurbishment, demolition, decommissioning or dismantling of a structure. Refer to the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#), for additional guidance if your work activity fits this definition.)

**Q3 Are there any work activities that do not apply to the requirements for prevention of falls?**

In accordance with the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) Section 79(4) the requirements are not applicable to:

- The performance of stunt work;
- The performance of acrobatics;
- A theatrical performance;
- A sporting or athletic activity;
- Horse riding.

The risks in relation to these work activities are to be managed in accordance with the “General risk and workplace management” requirements outlined in [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 \(SA\)](#) Section 36 and the [Hazard Management](#) Handbook chapter i.e. to apply the general principles of Hazard Management and the Hierarchy of Control. (Elimination, substitution of the hazard with something that gives rise to a lesser risk; isolation of the hazard from any person exposed to it; implementation of engineering controls, implementation of administrative controls or ensuring the provision and use of suitable personal protective equipment where a risk still remains.)

**Q4 What hazards are associated with falls from one level to another and what control measures could be used?**

Foreseeable hazards that require particular attention are associated with an activity:

- on any structure or plant being constructed or installed, demolished or dismantled, inspected, tested, repaired or cleaned;
- on a fragile surface (e.g., cement sheeting roofs, rusty metal roofs, fibreglass sheeting roofs and skylights);

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**Q4 What hazards are associated with falls from one level to another and what control measures could be used?**

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- on a potentially unstable surface (e.g. areas where there is potential for ground collapse, loose rocky slopes);
- requiring work using a portable or fixed ladder (e.g. where the working width and movement is limited, the working position is awkward requiring the need to stretch sideways, work above shoulder height or for a long duration, work at night or in a remote or isolated place, working from the top rungs/steps of the ladder);
- requiring the use of a tripod ladder or ladder for orchard work (e.g. pruning, picking);
- requiring work at height to collect samples for research purposes (e.g. bats, birds, ecology);
- requiring work outdoors on a sloping surface (e.g. ramp, hill, ground and potential for very wet or windy conditions, work at night, a remote or isolated place);
- requiring work on a stairwell (internal or external);
- using equipment to work at the elevated level (e.g. when using elevating work platforms);
- on a sloping or slippery surface where it is difficult for people to maintain their balance (e.g., on glazed tiles, a wet surface);
- near an unprotected open edge (e.g. near incomplete stairwells); and
- near a hole, shaft or pit into which a worker could fall (e.g. trenches, lift shafts or service pits).

Hazards identified through this process should be managed in accordance with the HSW Handbook chapter [Hazard Management](#).

Examples of control measures in accordance with the Hierarchy of Control are provided in **Table 1**. Schools/Branches will need to tailor appropriate control measures based on the nature and location of the activity. This is also applicable to any off-campus and research activities.

**Table 1**

Hazard	Examples of control measures. (One or more measures may be appropriate under each heading and should be considered.)
<b>Falls from one level to another</b>	<p><b>Eliminate the hazard</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work on the ground</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce shelving heights so that workers can access items from ground level</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use tools with extendable handles</li> </ul> <p><b>If elimination is not possible – minimise the risk using the following options as applicable.</b></p> <p><b>Substitution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use walkways for access instead of using ladders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install scaffolding or another type of work platform</li> </ul> <p><b>Isolation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a physical barrier (e.g. secure fence, cover or other forms of safeguarding)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install edge protection (e.g. guard railing which is between 900mm and 1100mm above the work surface, has mid rails, can withstand the impact of a person falling against them and toe boards which are secured and extend a min of 150mm above the platform surface)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install vertical containment sheeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install fall protection covers (i.e. covering holes and openings) which are capable of supporting the impact of a person falling onto it.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engineering controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Construct a permanent safe working platform which is secured against a structure for stability and installed with an edge protection system. It should be non-slip, free from trip hazards and provide safe access and egress. (Refer AS 1657 Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders – Design, construction and installation and for temporary platforms, AS 1576 Scaffolding and AS 4576 Guidelines for scaffolding.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide mechanical access i.e. elevated work platform e.g. boom type, scissor lifts and vertical mast. The use should be guided by AS 2550.10 Cranes-Safe Use – Elevating work platform. Workers must wear a safety harness (see Personal Protective Equipment, page 3). Note – for boom type platforms, where the boom length is 11m or more, the operator must hold a High Risk Licence. (See Q6)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Continued</p>

**Q4 What hazards are associated with falls from one level to another and what control measures could be used?**  
(continued)

<p><b>Falls from one level to another</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>Engineering controls (Continued)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install a safety net or catch platform capable of taking the load. (It must be installed as close as possible to the underside of the work area, but not in contact with the surface. The safety net must cover an area extending beyond the work area. It should only be used if it is not possible to install a physical barrier or use personal protection systems).</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use order picking forklift trucks for handling of materials stored at height</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a tool belt or side pouch or alternative method to ensure materials or tools are not carried while climbing the ladder</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Secure all items and erect barriers to prevent items from falling onto people below</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install guard rails</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Install temporary scaffolding (e.g. for painting, electrical work, building maintenance, construction or demolition work. Note – any scaffold from which a person could fall more than 4m must be erected by a certified scaffolder)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use a forklift work platform or industrial truck to elevate workers (Note – the design and construction must be in accordance with AS 2359 Powered industrial trucks and Safe Operating Procedures are required. Forklift operators must be assessed as competent by a registered assessor and have a High Risk Licence.)</li> </ul> <p><b>Administrative controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a risk assessment and document a Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)/Safe Operating Procedure (SOP) where required</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify workers who require specific training (e.g. training on a risk assessment and Safe Operating Procedure (if applicable) and where a proficiency or high risk work licence is required, record and monitor their training in accordance with the HSW Handbook <a href="#">Training Plan</a> and <a href="#">HSW Information, Instruction and Training</a> chapters</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide adequate supervision</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide assistance (e.g. buddy) if required (This includes where there is a risk of a fall in access areas or doorways if a secure barrier cannot be erected or the door locked shut until the activity is completed.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Select appropriate tools and equipment for the activity e.g. ladders, appliances which can be secured from falling if required (Note – no ladder other than a trestle ladder may be used to support planks for a working platform and any such platform may only be used for light duty work. The ladder is secured against displacement (i.e. slipping or sliding) and/or there is another person holding the base of the ladder.)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advise workers of the reporting process if they identify any defects/problems with equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Advise workers of the University's <a href="#">on-line reporting process</a> for any incident/injury/hazard</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the University's contractor management system is followed (if applicable)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure safe systems of work have been considered if the worker is working in isolation and this has been included on the risk assessment/Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) including emergency and rescue procedures. This may include the provision of communication equipment (e.g. radio, mobile phone)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure maintenance systems are in place, including six-monthly checks of anchor points and personal protective equipment (e.g. harnesses, fall arrest devices)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure maintenance schedules are in place to ensure replacement where necessary and that the equipment is fit for purpose, complies with the relevant Australian Standards prior to commencement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal protective equipment (PPE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safe harness or a pole safety belt attached to a secure structural support through the use of an adequate static-line system or attached to an appropriate anchorage</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use of a fall-arresting device connected to an anchorage point or static line to reduce the free fall distance (Note – before a fall-arresting device is used the work area must be inspected to ensure there are no obstructions in the potential fall path)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Travel restraint device (e.g. one that prevents a worker from reaching an unprotected edge by tethering them to an eye-bolt or other suitable anchorage point)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate footwear that minimises the risk of slipping (e.g. on wet surfaces)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety helmet that needs to be attached securely to the worker's head to ensure it remains in place should the person be arrested by fall protection equipment during a fall</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Industrial rope access system (e.g. may be used for external window cleaning in multi-story buildings)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">continued</p>
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**Q4 What hazards are associated with falls from one level to another and what control measures could be used?**  
(continued)

<p><b>Falls from one level to another</b> (continued)</p>	<p><b>Personal protective equipment (PPE) Continued</b></p> <p>Note - If using fall-arrest systems as a control measure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers must be properly trained and supervised in the use of the equipment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workers should not work in isolation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The lanyard assembly should be as short as possible when used in conjunction with a fall-arrest system, to minimise the pendulum effect</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The fall-arrest anchorage point (fixed or travelling on static lines) should be located so that the lanyard can be attached before the user moves into a position where they can fall.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> The components of a fall-arrest system must be compatible.</li> </ul> <p>Refer to AS 1891.4 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices – selection, use and maintenance for the selection of an appropriate fall-arrest system. A fall-arrest system must be installed by a certified person.</p>
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**Q5 Do I need approval to conduct work on a roof?**  
Yes, if you are required to access a roof (e.g. for a research project) or any other activity you are required to contact [Service Delivery](#) for advice.

▼ **Service Delivery**

Maintenance Service Centre Contacts			
Campus	Telephone	Fax	Email
North Terrace	8313 4008	8313 4010	<a href="mailto:maintenance.servicecentre@adelaide.edu.au">maintenance.servicecentre@adelaide.edu.au</a>
Roseworthy	8313 7657	831 37960	<a href="mailto:maintenance.roseworthy@adelaide.edu.au">maintenance.roseworthy@adelaide.edu.au</a>
Waite	8313 7217	8313 6552	<a href="mailto:maintenance.waite@adelaide.edu.au">maintenance.waite@adelaide.edu.au</a>

**Q6 Do I need a licence to operate items of plant e.g. elevating work platform, scaffolding, dogging or rigging work?**  
Yes, you need to obtain a licence and you must be trained and assessed as competent by a SafeWork SA Registered Assessor.

Contact SafeWork SA on 1300 365 255 should you require any further information or refer to the [SafeWork SA website](#).

**Q7 Where can I find more information on Prevention of falls?**

SafeWork SA	<a href="#">SafeWork SA website</a> <a href="#">Information Sheet: Ladders</a>
<a href="#">National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work (2006)</a>	
<a href="#">WHS Regulations 2012</a> (Chapter 4, Part 4 - Falls)	
<a href="#">Code Of Practice For Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplaces</a>	
<a href="#">HSW Handbook</a> <a href="#">Hazard Management</a>	

**Q7 Where can I find more information on Prevention of falls? Continued**

<a href="#">HSW Team</a>	
<p><u>Australian Standards</u> (Available electronically for staff and students via Australian Standards online)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.saiglobal.com/online/autologin.asp">http://www.saiglobal.com/online/autologin.asp</a>                      AS/NZS 1576 Scaffolding series                      AS/NZS 1657 Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders - Design, construction and installation                      AS/NZS 1891.1 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices—Harnesses and ancillary equipment                      AS/NZS 1891.2 supp:1-2001 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices - Horizontal lifeline and rail systems - Prescribed configurations for horizontal lifelines (Supplement to AS/NZS 1891.2:2001)                      AS/NZS 1891.3 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices - Fall-arrest devices                      AS/NZS 1891.4 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices - Selection, use and maintenance                      AS/NZS 1892 Portable ladders series                      AS/NZS 4142.3 Fibre ropes—Man-made fibre rope for static life rescue lines                      AS/NZS 4389 Safety mesh                      AS/NZS 4488 Industrial rope access systems series                      AS/NZS 4488.2 Industrial rope access systems—Selection, use and maintenance                      AS/NZS 4576 Guidelines for scaffolding                      AS 2550.16 Cranes—Safe Use—Mast climbing work platforms                      AS/NZS 4994 Temporary edge protection series</p>