



SAFETY ADVICE DESIGNED TO KEEP YOUR STAFF SAFE AND YOUR BUSINESS COMPLIANT



Preventing Falls On a Farm

Falls are the second highest cause of death in agriculture – every year at least eight people die falling from a height. Those who survive suffer broken bones and worse. Falls often happen from roofs, lofts, ladders, vehicles, bale stacks, and unsuitable access equipment, such as buckets. These accidents and injuries cause you pain and cost your farm time and money. Most fall injuries can be avoided.

The law covers all work activities where people could fall and injure themselves. The duties are on employers, the self-employed and others who have control over work at height. You must make sure work at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent to do the job

Main Points

The law says you need to follow these rules in this order:

- avoid work at height where you can; and if not
- use work equipment or measures to prevent falls; and if not
- use work equipment that minimises the distance and consequences of a fall.

Discussion Points

Working on roofs

- Most types of fibre cement roofs will be fragile. Roof lights will often also be fragile.
- No one must ever work on or from, or walk over, fragile roofs unless platforms, covers or similar are provided which will adequately support their weight.
- Always consider first whether it is really necessary to access the roof.

- Does the work need to be done, or could it be done in some other way, such as from below or from an integrated work platform?
- If you, your employees or contractors do need access roofs for any reason then always:
- Plan the work.
- Set aside enough time to do the work.
- Take account of weather conditions such as light levels, ice, wind and rain.
- Make sure everyone knows the precautions to be followed when working at height.
- Fix a prominent permanent warning notice at the approach to any fragile roof.
- Never walk on fragile materials such as asbestos or other fibre cement sheet, roof lights or glass. Roof lights and glass may have been painted over.
- Never 'walk the purlins' or 'walk the line of the bolts'.
- Roof ladders or crawling boards must span at least three purlins. They should be at least 600 mm wide and more when the work requires it.
- Don't use a pair of boards to 'leapfrog' across a fragile roof but provide enough boards.
- Take precautions to prevent a person falling from the ladder or board. Use edge protection or safety harnesses, or safety netting where this is not feasible. Take specialised advice.
- Roof ladders must be securely placed, with the anchorage bearing on the opposite side of the roof. Never use gutters to support any ladder.

Working on vehicles

- Jumping down from vehicles is bad for your knees and you are likely to fall.
- Take your time climbing down from the cab and use the provided steps and handholds rather than the steering wheel.
- Plan loading and unloading to avoid the need to work at height on the vehicle.
- Wear well-fitting, slip-resistant safety footwear when working on vehicles.
- Ask for well-designed access when purchasing vehicles and think about how you will be able to get to the high parts of a machine to maintain it safely.

Working with bales: loading trailers and stacking

- Many incidents (some fatal) involve loading bales on to the trailer, or during or after stacking. When loading, check that:
- trailer floors are in good condition and end racks or hay ladders are used;
- loads are built to bind themselves. Use sound bales for all edges;

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- stackers keep away from the edges. Drivers should indicate clearly before the trailer is moved;
- full loads are secured before leaving the field and no one rides on them. Provide ladders for access to the load.
- Stacking is a skill, and requires trained, competent people.
- Inspect stacks regularly, and make sure destacking is done safely.
- A falling bale can kill, so keep people clear when unloading or destacking.

Talk to Atlas about Safety Management for your business

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