

## Facilities Management from A to Z

Based on The FM Lexicon by Martin Pickard  
published monthly in Facilities by Lexis Nexis between 2008 and 2016

# W

orking at Height

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 places a duty on employers, the self-employed, and any person that controls the work of others to the extent of their control. This includes facilities managers who may contract others to work at height such as maintenance workers or window cleaners.

The Regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. No minimum height is specified so application is dependent upon an assessment of the risks involved in the circumstances of the operation and on the reasonable practicability of control measures. Activities covered include working at height on ladders, step ladders, scaffold towers, mobile elevated working platforms or in other locations from which people could fall, such as roofs, parapets or even natural locations.

The principle involved in following the Regulations is to carefully choose the right work equipment and to apply additional measures like guard rails to prevent falls before implementing other measures like nets or airbags which may only mitigate the distance and consequences of a fall or which may only provide personal protection from a fall.

Ladders should only be used for work at height where the risk assessment demonstrates that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and the use will be of short duration or if there are existing features on the work area that cannot be altered.

There are requirements for inspection of equipment and places of work by a competent person and the training of everyone involved in the work. Records should be kept of the inspections and training.

*The Work at Height Safety Association provide a series of useful technical guidance notes on height equipment for download at [www.wahsa.co.uk](http://www.wahsa.co.uk)*

*The Health and Safety Executive has produced a guide to the regulations which can be accessed at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf>*