

Fall From Height Workplace Fatal Injuries in 1H2025

Work-at-height activities must be carefully managed, as falls from height can result in serious or fatal injuries. In the first half of 2025, three workers died after falling from height.

The WSH Council reminds all companies to carry out site-specific risk assessments and put in place fall prevention/protection measures before deploying workers to work at height.

Worker fell through floor opening

On 23 February 2025, two workers were carrying out housekeeping at a building under construction. At the material time, the workers lifted a piece of plywood from the floor unaware that it was covering a floor opening underneath. As they were moving away the plywood, one of the workers stepped through the floor opening and fell about 3.9 metres to the ground below. The worker was sent to the hospital where he died four days later.

Figure 1: The floor opening through which the worker fell.

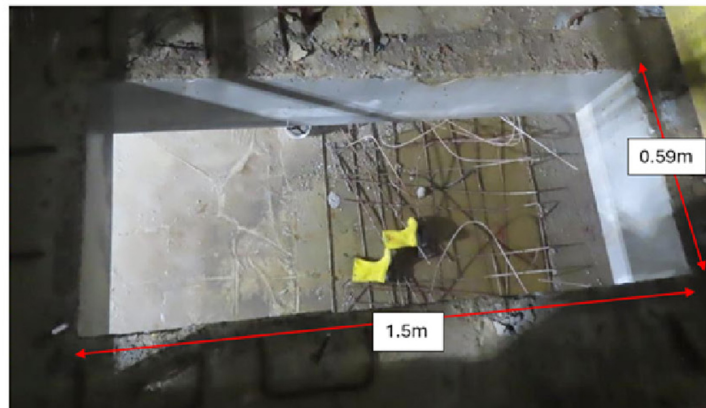
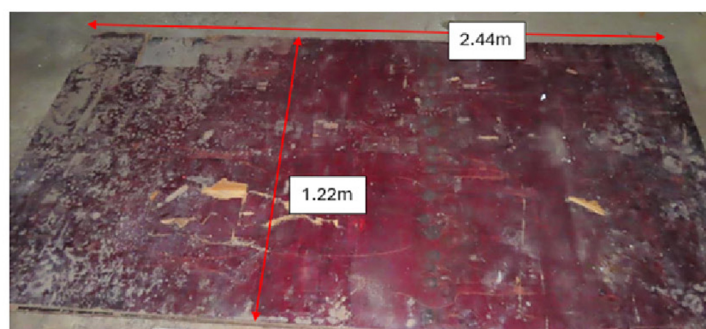


Figure 2: The piece of plywood that covered the floor opening.



Company director died after falling off a ladder

On 15 May 2025, the director of a landscaping company was using an A-frame ladder to access the roof of a private dwelling from its third storey balcony. During the process, he lost his balance, slipped and fell from the top rung of the ladder before landing on the balcony. He was sent to the hospital where he died the same day.

The ladder used was two metres in height and the roof was three metres above the balcony. The weather was clear and sunny at the time of the accident. The ladder remained upright after the accident.

Figure 3: Illustration of how the accident occurred.

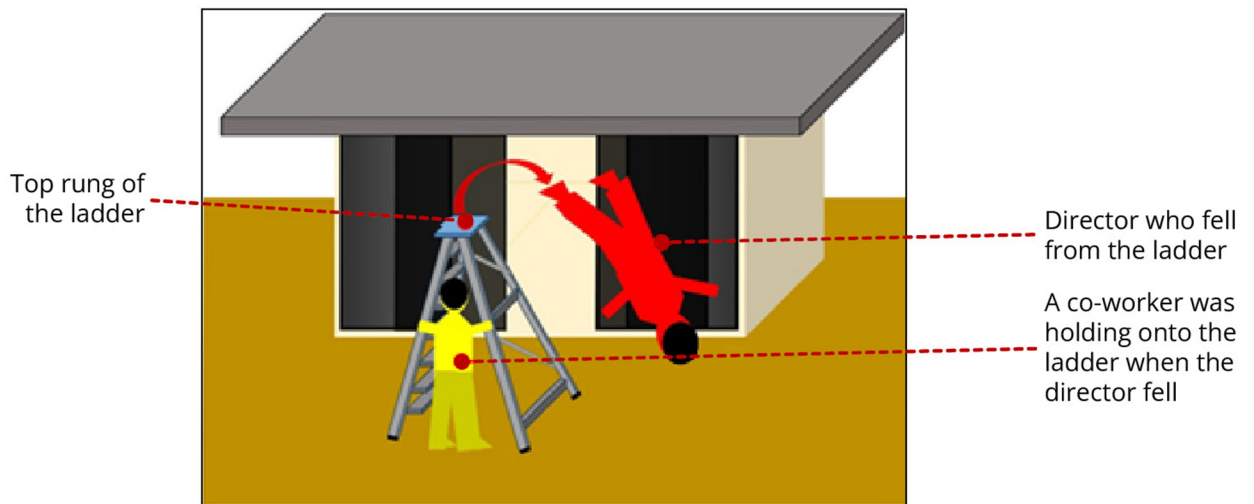


Figure 4: The A-frame ladder used to access the roof.

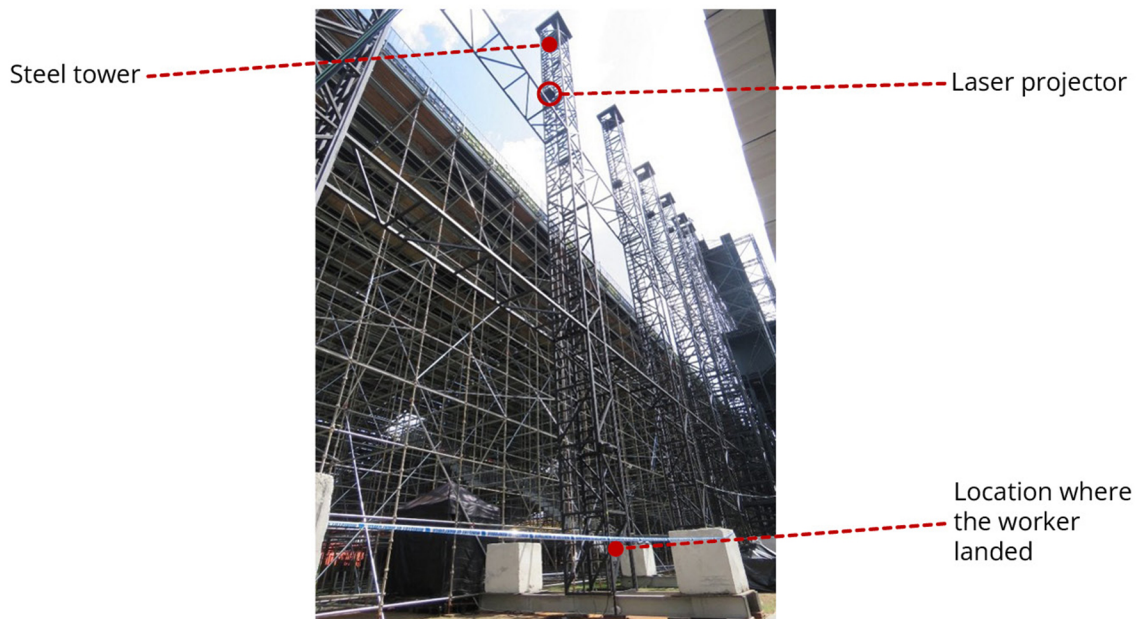


Worker fell from steel tower

On 30 May 2025, a rope access technician had completed cabling works for a laser projector at the top of a steel tower and was abseiling from a height of 14 metres when the anchorage rope he was using snapped, resulting in a fall to the ground. He was sent to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead on arrival.

The steel tower had a fixed access ladder with a vertical lifeline for ladder users to hook onto for fall protection.

Figure 5: The scene of the accident.



What companies should do

Companies should assess and ensure that their WSH management system includes the following measures or checks:

- **Onsite risk assessment:** Conduct a site inspection to identify workplace hazards (e.g. unprotected floor openings, inadequate edge protection). The inspection should also look out for foreseeable risks and check that control measures are in place to address the risks.
- **Fall prevention plan (FPP) and permit-to-work (PTW) System:** Occupiers of workplaces specified in [The First Schedule of the WSH \(Work at Heights\) Regulations 2013](#) are required to establish and implement an FPP for all work-at-height activities and a PTW system for work activities where a person could fall more than three metres. Ensure onsite checks are carried out by a competent person before authorising the work-at-height activity.
- **Training for workers:** For work at height, only deploy workers who have received appropriate and relevant training such as the Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) Course on Perform Work-at-Heights.

- **Hazard communication:** Brief workers (e.g. during daily toolbox meetings) on the onsite risks at their designated work area and the fall prevention plan before starting work. Train workers on the safe work procedure for their specific tasks (e.g. the procedure for removing/reinstating the cover/barrier of a floor opening).
- **Personal protective equipment (PPE):** Provide workers assigned to work at height, including working at or near floor openings, with either travel restraints or fall-arrest equipment plus a secure anchor point. For work on ladders, provide workers with suitable PPE such as a safety helmet and proper footwear (e.g. safety shoes).

Additional recommendations for site with floor openings

- **Cover and/or guard floor openings:** Cover all unprotected floor openings with a material strong enough to prevent a person falling through (e.g. a metal plate or mesh grating). Secure the cover (e.g. by bolting it to the floor) to ensure it cannot be accidentally moved or dislodged. Erect suitable barriers (e.g. guardrails) around the floor opening to prevent workers from entering the danger area.

If both the cover and barrier need to be temporarily removed (e.g. to facilitate work at or near the floor opening), implement a fall prevention plan and reinstate the cover and barrier once the work is complete.

- **Warning signs:** Place suitable signs on the cover and/or the barrier surrounding the floor opening, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Examples of warning signs to indicate the presence of a fall hazard/floor opening.



Additional recommendations for use of ladders

- **Safe use of ladder:** Ensure ladders used are of the correct height for workers to reach their designated work area(s) without having to stand on the top rung of the ladder. Instruct workers to maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times.

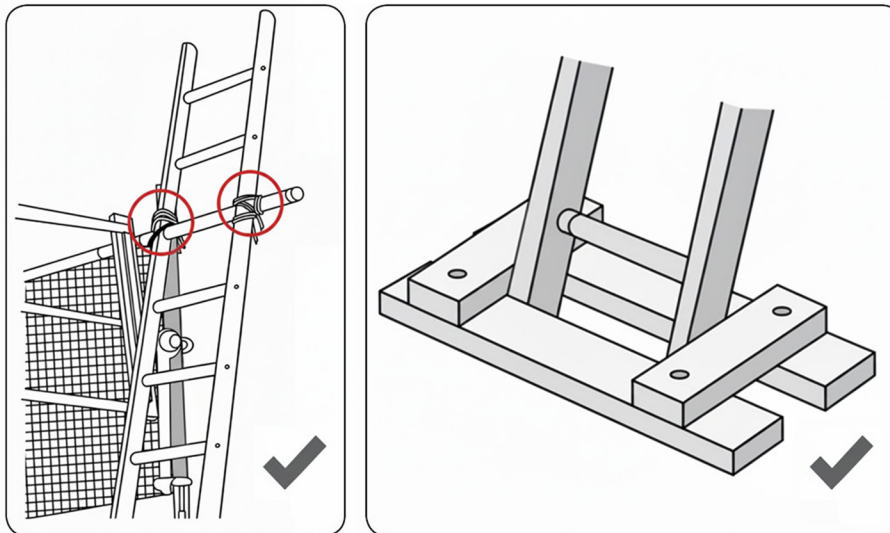
Figure 7: There is a high risk of falling when one stands on the top rung of an A-frame ladder.



- **Safer means of access:** If three points of contact with a ladder at all times is not possible for the work to be carried out, then a ladder is the wrong tool/equipment for the job. It is recommended to use other safer methods of access (e.g. a platform ladder, scaffold platform).

For movement between levels/floors, using a staircase is typically the safest option. In its absence, using a fixed ladder or secured leaning ladder may be considered.

Figure 8: Example of a secured ladder.



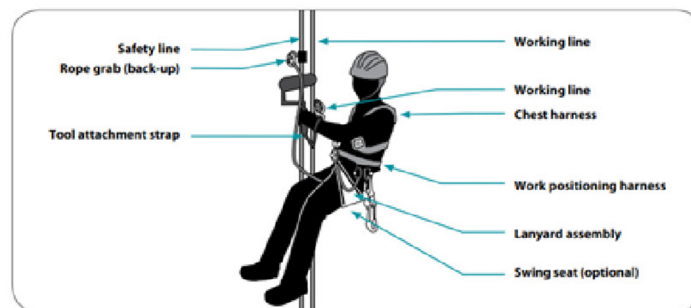
Note that ladders used to access another level should be tied and extended at least one metre above the landing point. This is to provide a secure handhold so that three points of contact can be maintained with the ladder at all times.

Alternatively, companies may consider constructing a tower scaffold/scaffold stairs to enable safe and easy access to roofs and/or across several levels. Companies may also consider the use of camera drones to inspect or survey areas that are inaccessible or at a height to avoid exposing workers to the risk of falling.

Additional recommendations for rope access work activity

- **Safer method of access:** Instruct workers to use a safer access method (e.g. staircase, access ladder) when these are available onsite. Workers should use a rope access system only when it is not reasonably practicable to use other safer methods of access to their designated work area.
- **Competent worker:** Only deploy workers who are trained and competent in their respective roles for rope access operations (e.g. rope access worker, supervisor or manager). Relevant training for rope access workers includes the IRATA (Industrial Rope Access Trade Association) Levels 1, 2 and 3 courses with the higher levels meant for more complex rope access tasks.
- **Safe work procedure (SWP):** To ensure worker safety during rope access operations, employers should include the following in their SWPs:
 - **Equipment inspection:** Engage a competent person to conduct a detailed inspection of the equipment at least once every six months. Instruct users to check that their equipment is in good condition before use. Keep records of equipment usage, inspection and maintenance.
 - **Independent lifeline:** Provide each rope access worker with at least two independently anchored lines: one rope as the working line and a second rope as a safety line (also commonly referred to as a lifeline; see Figure 9).

Figure 9: Example of rope access equipment with safety line and back-up rope grab.



- **Safe use of equipment:** Ensure the rope access equipment is used according to the manufacturer's instructions and within its safe working load. Working lines should be equipped with a safe means of ascent and descent, and have a self-locking system (e.g. a rope grab) to prevent falls.
- **Emergency response plan:** Develop and implement a rescue plan for emergency scenarios (e.g. rope system failure or unconscious worker). Have a trained rescue team on standby with the necessary rescue equipment onsite (e.g. rescue kit, stretcher, first aid kit).
- **Work supervision:** Provide supervision at all rope access worksites. Supervisors should ensure rope access workers understand the SWPs, provide adequate rest periods, and stop the work activity in adverse weather conditions (e.g. heavy rain, lightning, high wind speeds at the elevation where the work is being carried out). Do not allow workers to work unsupervised or alone.

For more information, refer to the WSH (Work at Heights) Regulations 2013, WSH (Scaffolds) Regulations 2011, Singapore Standard SS 528: 2006 (2014) Specification for Personal Fall-Arrest Systems (Parts 1 to 6), SS EN 131: 2019 Ladders, and SS 588: 2013 Personal Equipment for Protection against Falls – Rope Access Systems (Parts 1 & 2).

Relevant resources from the WSH Council include:

- [Code of Practice on Working Safely at Heights](#)
- [WSH Guidelines on Anchorage, Lifelines and Temporary Edge Protection Systems](#)
- [WSH Guidelines on Personal Protective Equipment for Work at Heights](#)
- [WSH Guidelines on Working Safely on Roofs](#)
- [Sample Checklist for Working at Heights](#)
- [Activity Based Checklist for Working Safely at Heights](#)
- [6 Basic WSH Rules for Working at Heights](#)
- [6 Basic WSH Rules for Working on Roofs](#)
- [Case Studies: Accidents Involving Work at Heights](#)
- [SME WSH Packs on Ladder Safety](#)
- WSH Insights on:
 - [Prevent Falls from Open Sides](#)
 - [Prevent Falls with Travel Restraints](#)
 - [Working Safely on Fragile Surfaces](#)
 - [Working Safely with Metal Scaffolds](#)

Under the WSH Act, first-time corporate offenders may be sentenced to the maximum fine of \$500,000 whilst individuals can either be sentenced to the maximum fine of \$200,000 and/or an imprisonment not exceeding 2 years. Read more on the [WSH Act penalties](#).

Information on the accidents is accurate at the time of publication. This may be subject to change as investigations are still on-going. Please also note that the recommendations provided here are not exhaustive and are meant to enhance workplace safety and health so that a recurrence may be prevented. The information and recommendations provided are not to be construed as implying liability on any party nor should it be taken to encapsulate all the responsibilities and obligations under the law.

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