

UNSAFE AND SAFE PRACTICES WHEN WORKING AT HEIGHT

Working at height is a high-risk activity, with falls from height accounting for more than 20% of all fatal injuries in 2021. The Ministry of Manpower put up [a Facebook post on 4 August 2022](#), calling out unsafe work at height practices which it found during inspections.

Here are examples of unsafe practices to avoid, and safe practices to adopt.

Unsafe



- ✗ Inadequate work platform
- ✗ Open sides
- ✗ No fall arrest equipment

Safe



- ✓ Fully boarded work platform
- ✓ Guard rails and toe-boards in place
- ✓ Fall arrest equipment hooked onto secured anchor point if workers need to temporarily remove guard rails

Unsafe



- ✗ Poor workplace housekeeping
- ✗ Unguarded floor opening
- ✗ Stored materials can fall over the edge, injuring workers below.

Safe



- ✓ Good workplace housekeeping
- ✓ Fully guarded work area with no floor openings
- ✓ Materials safely stored away from openings
- ✓ Toe-boards and netting help to prevent loose materials from falling off

Unsafe



- ✗ Work at height location with open sides
- ✗ Improper access: A-frame ladder used as leaning ladder
- ✗ Disorganised workplace creates trip hazards

Safe



- ✓ Work at height location with fully guarded perimeter railing
- ✓ Designated access point via stairway access
- ✓ Organised storage for a safer workplace

Unsafe



- ✗ Worker jumping off the roof to get onto the platform
- ✗ Gap in platform decking
- ✗ No fall arrest equipment

Safe



- ✓ Safe stairway access to work areas
- ✓ Platform decking flushed along their lengths and secured
- ✓ Work areas with open sides properly guarded
- ✓ Fall arrest equipment not needed in above work area

Unsafe



- ✗ Unsecured decking placed on unsecured pipes over void area
- ✗ Makeshift platform could collapse or flip on its side
- ✗ Makeshift guard rail with no toe-board

Safe



- ✓ Bird-cage scaffold erected in void areas to prevent falls through openings
- ✓ Fully boarded work platform with ladder access
- ✓ Properly secured guard rails with toe-boards

Unsafe



- ✗ Makeshift scaffold erected by untrained workers
- ✗ Scaffold placed on adjacent roof which may give way
- ✗ Unsafe access onto the scaffold via decking extended from building edge

Safe



- ✓ Scaffold erected by approved scaffold contractor
- ✓ Scaffold constructed on solid foundation or on cantilever brackets with PE design and calculation
- ✓ Safe access onto the scaffold and safe access within the scaffold to get to different lifts

Unsafe



- ✗ Unsafe work platforms with unsecured decking, missing guard rails and toe-boards, and no sole plates.
- ✗ Unsafe access to the work platforms

Safe



- ✓ Proper work platforms with secured decking, guard rails and toe-boards
- ✓ Safe ladder access to work platform
- ✓ Adequate foundation to prevent toppling
- ✓ Scaffold inspected by scaffold supervisor upon erection