

ONE LIFE.
PROTECT IT.

1 PREVENTING FALLS AT WORK: SUPPORTING THE HSE'S FALL PREVENTION WEEK



Every year, falls from height continue to be one of the leading causes of serious injury and fatalities in the workplace. As part of the Health and Safety Executive's Fall Prevention Week, businesses across the UK are being encouraged to review how they manage work at height and take practical steps to protect workers.

At Safety Advisors, we fully support this campaign and believe that preventing falls is not just about compliance — it is about protecting people, livelihoods, and businesses.

1.1 Why Fall Prevention Matters

Falls from height remain one of the biggest risks across industries such as construction, manufacturing, warehousing, facilities management, and maintenance. Even relatively low-level falls can result in life-changing injuries including fractures, head injuries, and long-term disability.

Common causes include:

- Unsafe use of ladders
- Poorly planned roof work
- Inadequate edge protection
- Fragile surfaces
- Improper use of mobile access equipment
- Slips and trips while working at height
- Lack of supervision or training

Many of these incidents are entirely preventable with proper planning and control measures.

1.2 The Legal Duty on Employers

Under the Work at Height Regulations, employers have a legal responsibility to ensure that work at height is properly planned, supervised, and carried out safely.

This includes:

- Avoiding work at height where possible
- Using suitable work equipment
- Ensuring workers are competent
- Inspecting equipment regularly
- Assessing risks before work begins
- Preventing falls using collective protection measures where practicable

Failure to manage these risks can lead not only to injuries but also enforcement action, prosecution, reputational damage, and significant financial costs.

1.3 Practical Steps to Reduce Fall Risks

During Fall Prevention Week, now is an ideal time for organisations to review their arrangements and ask:

1. Are Risk Assessments Suitable and Sufficient?

Risk assessments should identify all work at height activities and clearly outline the controls required to keep workers safe.

2. Is the Right Equipment Being Used?

Ladders may be suitable for short-duration, low-risk tasks, but many activities require safer alternatives such as podium steps, scaffold towers, or MEWPs.

3. Are Workers Properly Trained?

Workers should understand:

- Safe systems of work
- Equipment limitations
- Inspection requirements
- Emergency procedures
- The importance of reporting defects or unsafe conditions

4. Are Inspections Being Completed?

Access equipment, guardrails, harnesses, and fall arrest systems should be routinely inspected and maintained.

5. Is Safety Culture Being Encouraged?

Workers should feel empowered to stop unsafe work and raise concerns without hesitation.



1.4 Common Areas Businesses Overlook

In our experience, some of the most common issues include:

- Damaged or unsuitable ladders remaining in use
- Lack of edge protection during short-duration tasks
- Poor contractor management
- Unsafe access to roofs
- Inadequate rescue planning for harness users
- Complacency around “routine” tasks

Small oversights can have serious consequences.



1.5 Creating Safer Workplaces

Preventing falls is about more than meeting legal requirements. A proactive approach demonstrates commitment to worker wellbeing and helps create a positive safety culture throughout the organisation.

Fall Prevention Week serves as an important reminder that even experienced workers remain at risk when controls are not properly implemented.

Now is the time to:

- Review work at height procedures
- Reassess high-risk activities
- Inspect equipment
- Refresh training
- Engage workers in safety discussions

1.6 How We Can Help

At Safety Advisors, we support businesses with:

- Work at height risk assessments
- Site inspections and audits
- Construction health and safety support
- Training and awareness sessions
- Development of safe systems of work
- Compliance advice aligned with HSE guidance

If you would like support reviewing your current arrangements during Fall Prevention Week, please get in touch.

Safe in our knowledge.