

SAFETY TOOLBOX TALK :- WORKING AT HEIGHTS

Falls from heights are a major cause of fatalities and serious injuries throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Planning is an essential component in the preparation to perform work at heights and requires active involvement from those who will undertake the task.

This process is implemented to consider all the possible scenarios that could occur if the works are not managed effectively, with a view to addressing any concerns. When things don't go according to plan, it is likely that the planning component has been overlooked!

Things to consider:

- What type of fall protection or equipment is required to minimise the risk to myself and others?
- Can a mobile scaffold be used as opposed to a step ladder?
- Are the personnel trained to undertake the task i.e. work safely at heights, EWP licence etc.?
- Has a safe work method been developed and does everyone understand the contents and the role they will play?
- Has a supervisor been appointed to oversee the work?
- Is there a permit process required and has this been completed?
- Will there be other workers/personnel onsite and in close proximity?
- Has a rescue plan been developed and is it understood by those completing the work?



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Controlling the risk:

Once the job has been planned, the next step is to safely execute. It is important to note, that while there may be the best intentions to implement what has been planned, things don't always go as originally intended. Where this is the case, it is important to stop, reassess and determine a new approach to effectively manage the situation.

Things to consider:

- What happens, when things change? i.e. site/ weather conditions, access issues, availability of staff, equipment etc.
 - Is there a process in place to review the work method / risk assessment?
 - Are the controls adequate to minimise the risk of injury?
 - Are further resources required i.e. equipment, personnel?
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