Work at Height Training

Introduction – Greeting Your Trainees

Good morning everyone. My name is _____, and I'm your Safety Officer.
Today we're going to discuss one of the most important safety topics on any site: working at height.
Every year, more workers are injured or killed from falls than from almost any other single cause.
Our goal today is to make sure that you understand the risks, know how to protect yourself, and go home safely every day.

I'll walk you through what "working at height" actually means, the hazards involved, the rules and procedures we follow, the equipment you'll be using, and the right way to use it.
We'll also talk about emergency rescue and your responsibilities on the job.
By the end, you should feel confident about recognizing hazards and applying safe practices.

1. What "Working at Height" Means

Definition: Any work where you could fall and injure yourself is considered work at height — not just on tall towers.

Examples: Standing on a ladder, working on a roof, installing cables on a platform, working inside a pit or shaft.

Key Point: Even a fall from a small height can be fatal if you land on hard or sharp surfaces.

I often tell new workers: "If your feet aren't on the ground and you can fall to a lower level, you're at height."
This simple rule helps you decide when these procedures apply.

2. Why Working at Height Is Dangerous

Let's talk about the main hazards:

Falls from edges or through fragile surfaces like old roofing sheets.

Falls from ladders due to overreaching, poor footing or unstable bases.

Scaffold collapses when components are missing or overloaded.

Objects falling from above, striking workers below.

Weather conditions (wind, rain, ice) making surfaces slippery.

Improper use of harnesses or lifelines leading to failure during a fall.

Most incidents happen because of poor planning, lack of proper equipment, or not following safe practices.

That’s why training and preparation are so critical.

3. Legal & Company Requirements

In our company, and in most countries, laws and standards require:

A risk assessment before starting work at height.

Safe systems of work — written procedures or permits.

Competent workers and supervisors trained for the task.

Proper equipment that is inspected and maintained.

A rescue plan in case of a fall.

When inspectors visit, they check not only your PPE but also our documents and rescue arrangements. Compliance protects both you and the company.

4. Planning and Risk Assessment

Before starting any height work, we plan carefully:

Identify hazards – where can a fall happen, how far, what’s below?

Decide controls – can we do it from the ground? Use guardrails? Use scaffolds?

Write procedures – permit to work, method statement.

Brief workers – toolbox talk, sign-on sheet.

Inspect equipment – ladders, scaffolds, harnesses, anchor points.

Review weather – high winds or storms? Delay the job if unsafe.

Every one of you should know the plan and understand your role before you leave the ground.

5. Hierarchy of Controls

We always try to control hazards in the following order:

Eliminate the need to work at height – bring the work down, use long tools, preassemble parts on the ground.

Guard or isolate – install guardrails, toe boards, edge protection, or use a platform.

Use equipment – scaffolds, mobile elevated work platforms, man baskets.

Administrative controls – safe work procedures, warning signs, supervision.

PPE and fall arrest – harness, lanyard, anchor point.

Harnesses and lanyards are the last line of defense, not the first.
Never think a harness makes it okay to ignore other precautions.

6. Equipment for Working at Height

Ladders

Only use if the job is short and low-risk.

Secure top and bottom.

Maintain 4:1 angle.

Don’t carry heavy loads up a ladder.

Scaffolds

Must be erected by competent persons.

Must have guardrails and toe boards.

Inspect before first use each shift.

Never alter or remove components yourself.

Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs)

Operators must be trained and authorized.

Keep load within limits.

Wear harness if required by manufacturer.

Harnesses & Lanyards

Inspect before each use: stitching, webbing, hooks.

Connect only to approved anchor points.

Keep lanyard short to minimize fall distance.

Store clean and dry.

Anchor Points

Must be rated for fall arrest.

Never tie off to handrails, pipes or electrical conduits.

I will demonstrate each type of equipment in today’s practical session.

7. Safe Work Procedures

Here’s what we expect from every worker:

Attend pre-job briefing and sign attendance.

Wear all required PPE — helmet with chinstrap, harness, lanyard, safety shoes, gloves.

Check your equipment personally before use.

Keep the area tidy — no loose materials near edges.

Use tool lanyards to prevent dropped objects.

Never bypass guardrails or climb on scaffold frames.

Maintain three points of contact on ladders.

Report hazards immediately to your supervisor.

Stop work if conditions change or it feels unsafe.

Safety is everyone’s responsibility.
If you see something unsafe, speak up — you have the right and the duty.

8. Emergency & Rescue Planning

We don’t just plan to prevent falls; we plan for what happens if one occurs.

We have a rescue plan and equipment on site.

Selected personnel are trained in rescue and first aid.

Communication methods (radios, alarms) are in place.

After a fall arrest, rescue must be prompt to prevent suspension trauma.

Practice drills help us respond quickly and calmly.

If you witness a fall, do not rush in without thinking.
Call the emergency number, follow the plan, and let the trained team act.

9. Training and Competency

You are part of this training today because the law and our company policy require it.
But more importantly, because your life and your co-workers' lives depend on it.

You will learn hazard recognition.

You will practice equipment inspection and use.

You will know the procedures for rescue.

You will be assessed for competence.

You will receive a certificate or record of training.

Refresher training is required periodically or after any incident.

10. Your Role and Responsibilities

As a worker:

Follow instructions and procedures.

Use equipment properly.

Report defects or hazards.

Cooperate with supervisors.

Take care of your own health and safety and that of others.

As supervisors or safety personnel:

Plan and authorize work at height.

Provide proper equipment.

Ensure training and competence.

Monitor and enforce procedures.

Lead by example.

11. Common Mistakes to Avoid

Working at height without a harness or guardrails.

Using damaged ladders or scaffolds.

Overreaching from ladders.

Using improvised anchor points.

Dropping tools or materials.

Ignoring weather warnings.

Failing to inspect or maintain equipment.

Learn from past incidents — we review case studies in our refresher courses.

12. Summary & Key Messages

If you can fall and get hurt, you’re working at height.

Plan before you start.

Use the hierarchy of controls — eliminate, guard, then protect.

Inspect your equipment every time.

Follow safe work procedures.

Be prepared for rescue.

Speak up about unsafe conditions.

Remember: Safety at height is a team effort.
Everyone must play their part.