



SAFETY ALERT

Working at Heights

INCIDENT

A contractor fell to a concrete floor and fractured his pelvis from a height of approximately 4 metres while working on an earthmoving machine in the workshop of a mine

ISSUES

Working at heights often requires the need to wear harnesses and appropriately anchor lanyards. It may also require fit-for-purpose equipment, maintenance practices, and pre-work inspections of equipment.

Structural failure of elevating work platforms can also occur, with the corrosion of steel core fibreglass booms of cherry pickers and controls that are exposed to inadvertent external contact that do not comply with AS1418.10 – 2004.

CIRCUMSTANCES

The contractor was fitting a crowd cylinder to a large front-end loader when his footing slipped and he fell to a concrete floor.



When working at heights a hierarchy of control measures apply to safeguard the person

INVESTIGATION

The contractor did not have a platform from which to work nor was he wearing fall protection. The pre-start work assessment sheet was incorrectly completed by the worker as he did not identify that he would be working at heights.



Fall protection equipment or a platform was needed in this situation

RECOMMENDATIONS

The **OH&S Regulation Chapter 4 Division 6 clause 56 (a)** sets out a hierarchy of control measures to apply to safeguard persons working at height. In accordance with the principles of risk management and as stated in the clause, one can only adopt a control lower in the hierarchy if it is reasonably impracticable to apply a higher one.

It should be noted that the clause does **not specify a height at which controls must be applied**, as hazards exist for working at any height above the ground.

(However, the lowest control listed in Subclause (a) (iii) does state that controls **must** be provided if a person can fall more than **2 metres**, so it can be expected that the risk **must** be appropriately addressed at **2 metres** and above).

1. Ensure that appropriate risk management principles are in place.
2. Ensure people are trained and competent at assessing the need for applying the hierarchy of controls for working at heights.
3. A risk assessment **must** be carried out on identified hazards associated with the workplace.

4. Ensure that all work practices are carried out in accordance with relevant standards of engineering practice regarding working at heights.
6. Ensure all equipment is fit for purpose.
7. Ensure that the equipment is maintained in accordance with the original equipment manufacturer's recommendations.
8. Ensure that safety and design features of equipment comply with relevant Australian Standards.
10. Ensure that pre-work inspections are carried out thoroughly by a trained operator.
11. Ensure that persons working at heights are wearing harnesses and that lanyards are anchored appropriately.

Signed



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