

# MARCH SAFETY THEME: WORK AT HEIGHTS

Work at heights takes place in any location when there is a risk of a fall of more than 1.8m. This includes working on a roof, on a ladder, scaffold or elevated work platform, or near the edge of a trench, pit or excavation.



## WORK AT HEIGHTS HAZARDS

- Persons or objects falling from height.
- Untrained workers.
- Unsuitable or damaged equipment.
- Weather conditions such as strong wind, rain and lightning can increase the risks associated with work at heights.
- Overhead structures such as beams, roof and powerlines.

## WORK AT HEIGHTS RISKS

- Fatality or injury from falling or from being hit by a dropped object.
- Electric shock or electrocution from direct contact or from electricity jumping the gap (arc) between the conductor and the worker.
- Suspension trauma.

## SUSPENSION TRAUMA

Suspension trauma can occur when a person wearing a harness falls and is suspended in an upright position. The harness can prevent the flow of blood from the femoral arteries in the groin and legs. Suspension trauma can be fatal.

A work at heights rescue plan must be developed when fall arrest PPE is being used. The plan must detail how a person will be quickly and safely retrieved in the event of a fall. All persons involved with the work at heights task must be familiar with the rescue plan BEFORE starting the work.

## CONTROLS

Critical controls for minimising the risks associated with work at heights are shown in the video on the OTML Team Site Portal.

Watch the video here:

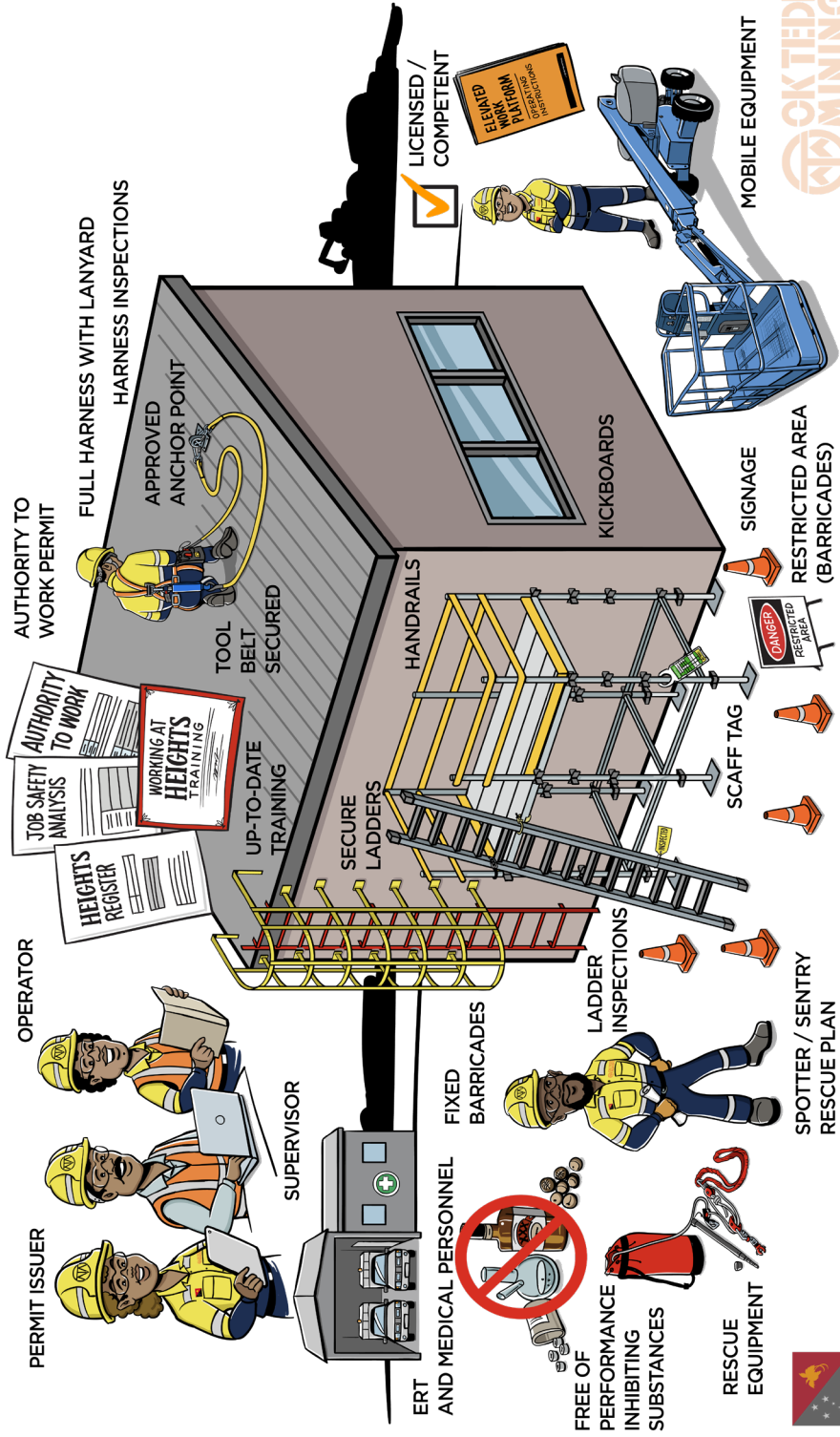
[http://newotmlhome/TeamSites/imsd/Training%20Videos/otml\\_working\\_at\\_height\\_SD/otml\\_working\\_at\\_height\\_SD.mp4](http://newotmlhome/TeamSites/imsd/Training%20Videos/otml_working_at_height_SD/otml_working_at_height_SD.mp4)

### Be the CONTROL not the HAZARD

1. Read, understand and sign onto the JSA and Authority to Work before starting the work at heights.
2. Make sure you are trained and authorised for the job.
3. Be aware - look up, down, around.
4. Have a spotter in place on the ground.
5. Use the right PPE, including fall body harness and lanyard attached to an approved anchor point.
6. Only use approved equipment.
7. Make sure regular inspections and maintenance of PPE, equipment and controls takes place.
8. Tether or contain tools and materials to prevent them falling from height.
9. Prevent access under the work, by creating an exclusion zone.
10. Make sure a rescue plan and rescue equipment is in place.
11. Refer to the **Key Control Checklist (See over)** to make sure all key controls are in place BEFORE working at heights.



## Be the CONTROL not the HAZARD!



### RISKS

- Fall from height
- Dropped object
- Struck by dropped object
- Suspension trauma
- Contact overhead power lines
- Risks may result in injury or fatality

### KEY CONTROL CHECKLIST

- Am I able to perform the work from a work platform with a protected edge or can the equipment be lowered to ground level?
- Am I fit, competent and authorised to use fall protection equipment?
- Have I ensured that my fall protection equipment has been inspected and approved for site use?
- Have I ensured that the point of attachment for fall protection is signed and approved for site use?
- Have I checked that the work area below is correctly signed and barricaded?
- Have I tethered or otherwise correctly restrained all equipment and materials to prevent them falling?
- Have I checked that the scaffold system has a current tag displayed that indicates approved access?
- Have I ensured that portable ladders are approved for site use?
- Have I ensured that the portable ladder I am using is correctly positioned and secured?

## OPERATOR

- Am I able to perform the work from a work platform with a protected edge or can the equipment be lowered to ground level?
- Am I fit, competent and authorised to use fall protection equipment?
- Have I ensured that fall protection equipment has been inspected and approved for site use?
- Have I ensured that the point of attachment for fall protection is signed and approved for site use?
- Have I checked that the work area below is correctly signed and barricaded?
- Have I tethered / restrained all equipment and materials to prevent them falling?
- Have I checked the scaffold system has a current tag displayed that indicates approved access?
- Have I ensured that portable ladders are approved for site use?
- Have I ensured that the portable ladder I am using is correctly positioned and secured?

## SUPERVISORS / SUPERINTENDENT

- Are all personnel required to use fall protection fit and competent in its use?
- Can the work be performed from a work platform with a protected edge or lowered to the ground to eliminate the requirement for the use of fall protection?
- Have all below work areas been barricaded and signed to warn of work being performed?
- Are all portable ladders tagged to ensure they are approved for site use?
- Is all fall protection equipment inspected, tagged and approved for site use?
- Are all anchor points clearly signed and approved for fall protection equipment attachment?
- Do all scaffolds clearly display the required tagging to indicate approved access?
- Are all scaffolds erected and dismantled by competent and authorised personnel?
- Are all personnel involved in the erection or dismantling of scaffolding wearing and attaching approved fall protection equipment?
- Is an Authority to Work in place for high risk work?
- Is the spotter/sentry and rescue plan in place for high risk work?

## MANAGERS

- Are training systems in place to ensure competencies are achieved and maintained?
- Is there a schedule in place for the inspection, approval and ongoing management of portable ladders at site?
- Is there a schedule in place for the inspection, approval and ongoing management of fall protection equipment at site?
- Are all scaffold systems designed and approved by a competent person?
- Are regular inspections performed for all scaffolding systems at site?
- Is there a schedule to ensure all anchorage points for fall protection are regularly inspected?
- Are registers maintained to record all portable ladders, fall protection equipment, approved anchorage points and scaffolding systems?
- Does the site Emergency Response Management Plan include responses to manage suspension trauma?
- Could the approved practices for working at height be improved?