



# Toolbox Talk

June 2023



## Working at Heights

**Health and Safety are at the centre of everything we do at ATNZ. It is imperative that our apprentices do not engage in any unsafe work practices and if you see anything you believe is unsafe you must report it to your host/employer and ATNZ Account Manager.**

Working at heights can be dangerous, but it is something ATNZ apprentices must do. Therefore, it is crucial to understand and prioritise safety when working in elevated environments. This month's Toolbox

Talk will equip you with essential knowledge and guidelines in all aspects of health and safety related to working at heights.



# Working **safely** with ladders

Ladders are commonly used. However, they can pose significant risks if not used correctly. This section provides essential guidelines to ensure your safety when working with ladders.



## 1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT LADDER

- Select the appropriate ladder for the task, considering height, weight capacity, and stability.
- Ensure the ladder is in good condition, free from defects or damage.
- Use a ladder with slip-resistant feet or a stabiliser to prevent slips and falls.

## 2 SETTING UP AND POSITIONING THE LADDER

- Place the ladder on a stable and level surface, away from hazards or obstructions.
- Extend the ladder at least a metre above the working surface for easy access and stability.
- Use the 4:1 rule when positioning the ladder (for every four metre of height, move the ladder one metre from the vertical surface).
- Place the base on a firm, solid surface. Avoid slippery, wet or soft surfaces. Place a board under the ladder's feet to provide firm footing if you must put the ladder on a soft surface.

## 3 CLIMBING AND WORKING ON LADDERS

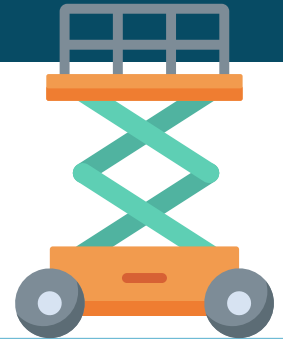
- Face the ladder while ascending or descending and maintain three points of contact. This means that two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Never stand on the top rung or step of a ladder.
- Avoid overreaching while working; reposition the ladder instead.
- Never get on or off a ladder from the side unless it has been secured to prevent movement.
- Never climb with equipment in your hands. Use your pockets, equipment belt, or tool pouch and raise heavy objects with a hand line. If you forget something, always climb down the ladder to retrieve it yourself; don't have someone toss it up to you. And never ask someone to climb up your ladder to give you supplies.
- When you descend a ladder, practice the same safety rules. Face the ladder, keep your body square and hold on to the rungs. Lastly, step off at the bottom rung of the ladder. Never jump off of a ladder.

## 4 ADDITIONAL SAFETY MEASURES

- Use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as non-slip footwear and safety harnesses.
- Regularly inspect and maintain ladders, including cleaning and checking for damage.
- Attend ladder safety training and follow all provided instructions.
- If you're using a step ladder, be sure to open it completely before you climb. If you have to use a step ladder near a doorway, lock or barricade the door and post signs so no one will open it and knock you off the ladder.
- If the ground is uneven, utilize boards or other methods to ensure the ladder has even ground to stand on.

# Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs)

MEWPs provide a safe and efficient alternative to ladders. However, their operation requires proper training and adherence to safety protocols. This section covers key aspects of working with MEWPs.



## 1 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

- Only operate a MEWP if you have received proper training and certification. You should also not be going up on an MEWP unless you have undergone this training or are being supervised directly by someone who has.
- Familiarise yourself with the specific model of MEWP you are using before operation.

## 2 PRE-OPERATION CHECKS

- Conduct a thorough inspection of the MEWP before each use, checking for any mechanical or structural issues.
- Ensure all safety features, such as guardrails and harness anchor points, are in place and functional.

## 3 SAFE OPERATION

- Always wear an approved safety harness and ensure it is attached to an approved anchor point.
- Operate the MEWP on stable and level ground, avoiding slopes or uneven terrain.
- Be aware of overhead obstacles, power lines, and other potential hazards.
- Stay within the maximum load capacity of the MEWP.

## 4 EXCLUSION ZONES

- Exclusion zones around the MEWP must be implemented and barricaded to prevent accidents and where unauthorized personnel are not allowed.
- Authorisation and training must be provided before people are allowed into the exclusion zone.

## 5 BARRICADES

- Physical barriers like fences and cones must mark the exclusion zones.
- These must be sturdy and visible and regularly inspected for effectiveness and condition.

## 6 SIGNAGE

- Signage must be prominently displayed by the platform.
- Must communicate safety instructions, and warnings, as well as hazards, precautions and access restrictions.

## 7 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- Familiarise yourself with the emergency lowering procedures for your specific MEWP.
- Keep emergency contact numbers readily available and follow proper protocols in case of an incident.

# Harnesses

When it comes to working at heights, harness safety plays a critical role in ensuring the well-being and protection of workers. Whether it's scaling ladders or utilising Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs), incorporating proper harness usage is paramount to preventing accidents and reducing the risk of falls.

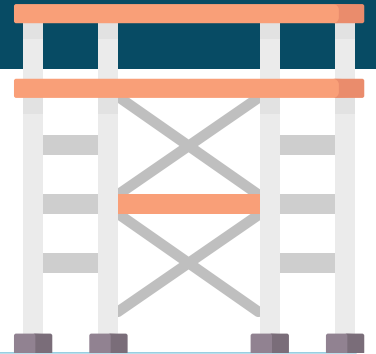
Harnesses act as a lifeline, providing a secure connection between workers and their workstations. They distribute the impact forces of a fall across the body, minimising the risk of severe injuries. Here are some key points to consider when it comes to harness safety:



- 1 PROPER SELECTION**
  - Choose the correct harness for the job, considering factors such as the work environment, anticipated hazards, and the individual worker's body type. Then, ensure the harness meets relevant safety standards.
- 2 INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE**
  - Regularly inspect harnesses for signs of wear, damage, or deterioration. Replace any defective or worn-out components promptly. Keep a record of inspections and maintenance performed.
- 3 PROPER FITTING**
  - Ensure the harness fits correctly. Adjustable straps and buckles should be appropriately adjusted to provide a snug, yet comfortable fit, allowing freedom of movement without compromising safety.
- 4 DONNING AND DOFFING**
  - You must be trained to put on and take off a harness properly. Adopting the correct sequence of buckling and tightening procedures is imperative to ensure a secure fit.
- 5 ANCHORAGE POINTS**
  - Identify and use suitable anchorage points that can support the intended load. Ensure the anchorages are strong, stable, and properly installed to withstand the forces generated during a fall.
- 6 FALL CLEARANCE**
  - Calculate and maintain the required fall clearance distance to prevent workers from striking lower-level obstacles during a fall. Consider factors such as the length of the lanyard, the height of the anchor point, and the worker's height.
- 7 TRAINING AND AWARENESS**
  - You must be trained on the proper use of harnesses, fall protection systems, and rescue procedures. In addition, it is vital to be aware of and adhere to safety protocols.
- 8 REGULAR REVIEW AND EVALUATION**
  - Continuously review and evaluate the effectiveness of your harness safety program. Incorporate worker feedback and stay updated with industry best practices and regulations.
- 9 SHARED RESPONSIBILITY**
  - Employers must prioritise worker safety by providing the necessary training, equipment, and supervision, while workers must actively participate by utilising the harnesses correctly and reporting any safety concerns promptly.

# Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a commonly used structure in construction and engineering that provides temporary support and access for working at heights. Here are some essential points to remember about scaffolding safety:



## 1 STABILITY AND INSPECTIONS

- Scaffolding must be erected on stable ground and properly secured to prevent collapse or shifting.
- Regular inspections should be conducted to ensure its structural integrity and identify any damage or weaknesses.

## 2 PROPER ASSEMBLY

- Scaffolding should be assembled by trained personnel following manufacturer guidelines and industry standards.
- Each component must be securely connected, and guardrails should be installed at all open sides and edges to prevent falls.
- All scaffolding above five metres must be assembled by a fully licensed scaffolder. All scaffolds over five metres, all suspended and all special scaffolds have a register on site which must be completed and updated at weekly inspections by a certified scaffolder.

## 3 ACCESS AND EGRESS

- Safe access points, such as ladders or staircases, should be provided for workers to reach and leave the scaffolding.
- Climbing on cross-bracing or the structure itself is strictly prohibited.

## 4 LOAD CAPACITY

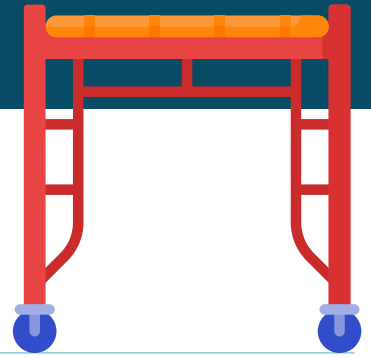
- Scaffolding must support the intended load, including workers, tools, and materials.
- Exceeding the weight limit can lead to structural failure, so adhering to the specified capacity is vital.

## 5 FALL PROTECTION

- To prevent falls, workers on scaffolding should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as harnesses and lanyards.
- Guardrails should be inspected regularly to ensure they are secure and at the correct height. Remember, proper training, adherence to safety guidelines, and diligent inspections are essential to ensure the safe use of scaffolding and prevent accidents when working at heights.



# Temporary Working Platforms (TWP)s



Temporary Working Platforms (TWPs) are elevated platforms used for various tasks at heights, such as maintenance, repairs, or installations. Here are key points to use for TWP safety:

## 1 STABLE FOUNDATION

- TWPs should be set up on firm and level ground to maintain stability. Uneven surfaces or unstable foundations can increase the risk of tipping or collapse.

## 2 GUARDRAILS AND TOEBOARDS

- To prevent falls, all exposed sides and edges of TWPs must be fitted with guardrails and toeboards. These protective barriers should be at least one meter high and securely installed.

## 3 SAFE ACCESS AND EGRESS

- TWPs should have safe and easily accessible entry and exit points. In addition, sturdy and properly positioned ladders or stairways should be provided to minimise the risk of slips, trips, or falls during ascent or descent.

## 4 REGULAR INSPECTIONS

- Inspect TWPs before each use to ensure they are structurally sound, free from defects, and the working surface is not slippery. Any damaged or faulty components should be repaired or replaced immediately.

## 5 LOAD CAPACITY AND OVERLOADING

- TWPs have specific load capacities that should never be exceeded. Avoid overloading the platform with excessive weight, as it can compromise its stability and lead to accidents.

Remember, proper training, adherence to safety protocols, and regular inspections are crucial for safely using Temporary Working Platforms, minimising the risk of accidents and injuries when working at heights.

## Summary

Working at heights requires careful attention to safety protocols to prevent accidents and injuries. By following this month's Toolbox Talk guidelines, you are taking a significant step toward ensuring your and your colleagues' well-being. Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility. So stay informed, stay cautious, and always prioritise your safety.





# Remember **STAAAR** = Good Work Practices **Stop Think Assess Act Review**

## Health and safety reps

Your Health and Safety (H&S) Reps are here to represent and assist you (apprentices) in all health and safety matters. If you would like to talk to an H&S Rep or have any H&S issues, feel free to contact any one of them. They will be more than happy to help.

### Waikato

Elizabeth Humberstone 027 806 8879

### Wellington

Joseph Toeaso 027 419 4730

### ATNZ Staff

Kylie Mason 027 431 5877

Jo Brierley 027 438 8195

Alan Lockett 027 239 6197

## Health and safety summary April/May

Remember to keep reporting accidents and incidents so we can all learn from them.

It's great to see near misses being reported and we encourage you to keep reporting these so we can prevent an actual injury happening.

- S** Stop
- T** Think
- A** Assess
- A** Act
- R** Review

Lost time injuries	0
First aid injuries	2
No injury	0
Medical treatment injuries	1
Near miss	0
Non work injuries	4
Restricted work injuries	1
Pain/discomfort	0
<b>Total Incident</b>	<b>8</b>

# Incidents

<b>First aid injury</b>	Cut to finger – Late reported
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Manual handling
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice received a cut on their hand from a sharp edge on a piece that they were turning in the lathe
<b>Immediate actions taken</b>	First aid applied
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Communicated to apprentice apply STAAR to their work practice
<b>Restricted work injury</b>	Sprain to ankle and bruising
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Fall from height
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was descending a ladder. Just as they got near the bottom of the ladder, the bottom of the ladder slipped out from under them, causing them to fall
<b>Immediate actions taken</b>	First aid applied and went to doctor for further assessment
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks. Ensure ladder is secure and/or have someone hold the ladder to prevent slipping
<b>First aid injury</b>	Grinding dust in eye
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Foreign body
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was grinding and got dust in their eye
<b>Immediate actions taken</b>	First aid applied
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks. Ensure double eye protection is worn when completing grinding tasks
<b>Medical treatment injury</b>	Cut to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Powered tools and equipment
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was screwing in a tech screw with impact driver when tech bit snapped. When it snapped their hand moved forward, coming into the contact with the sharp edge of the snapped tech bit cutting their left index finger requiring stitches
<b>Immediate actions taken</b>	First aid applied and went to doctor for further assessment
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Communicated to apprentice to be aware of surroundings when completing tasks and think about body position in relation to the task. Apply STAAR to their work practice