

3 Working at height safety

3.1 Typical health and safety regulations provide that every employer ensure that work is not carried out at height where it is reasonably practicable to carry out the work safely otherwise than at height. Where work is carried out at height, every employer should take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

3.2 The measures should include:

3.2.1 Ensuring that the work is carried out:

- From an existing place of work; or
 - (In the case of obtaining access or egress) using an existing means, which complies with guidelines with those regulations, where it is reasonably practicable to carry it out safely and under appropriate ergonomic conditions; and
- Where it is not reasonably practicable for the work to be carried out in accordance with the previous paragraph, sufficient work equipment should be provided to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, a fall occurring.

3.2.2 Where the measures taken do not eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, every employer should, so far as it is reasonably practicable, provide sufficient work equipment to minimize:

- The distance and consequences; or
- Where it is not reasonably practicable to minimize the distance, the consequences, of a fall; and
- Without prejudice to the generality of section 3.2, provide such additional training and instruction or take other additional suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

3.3 The regulations can generally be interpreted to mean that wherever possible working at height should be avoided, but where that is not possible, then it should be made as safe as possible by providing facilities and equipment to minimize the risk of injury (see figure 8.8).

