



WORKING AT HEIGHTS

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURE:

To eliminate or minimise the risk of fatalities, injuries and incidents arising from working at heights.

1. DEFINITIONS

Fall restraint - means an approved device and any necessary components that function together to restrain a person in such a manner as to prevent that person from falling to a lower level.

Fall arrest system - means the use of multiple, approved safety equipment components such as body harnesses fitted with a “step strap”, double lanyards (of which one is adjustable), deceleration devices, drop lines, horizontal and/or vertical lifelines and anchorages, interconnected and rigged as to arrest a free fall.

Fall prevention - means the design and use of a fall prevention system such that no exposure to an elevated fall hazard occurs. This may require more than one fall prevention system or a combination of prevention or protection measures.

Suspension trauma - is the effect that can occur when a person’s legs are immobile in an upright posture for a prolonged period, after an arrested fall with a fall-arrest system. The person is suspended and caught in an upright, vertical position and the harness straps cause pressure on the leg veins. The blood flow to the heart is reduced, resulting in fainting, restriction of movement or loss of consciousness. This may lead to renal failure and eventually death, depending on a person’s susceptibility. The condition may be worsened by heat and dehydration.

Fixed lanyard - is a line used as part of a lanyard assembly to connect a harness to an anchorage point or a static line in situations where there is risk of a fall.

Inertia reel - (also known as a self-retracting lanyard or fall-arrest block) is a



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Document No.:
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Effective date:
August 2011

mechanical device that arrests a fall by locking onto a drop line and at the same time allows freedom of movement.

Barricading - is defined as a physical barrier that prevents inadvertent access to an area e.g. handrails, access doors and gates or similar installations, temporary or permanent. Barrier tape does not qualify as barricading.

Demarcation - is defined as any method that indicates that an area is used for a specific purpose, or that access is restricted. Examples are barrier tape, painted lines on floor surfaces, portable signs denoting drop zones or no access past a specific point.

Edge protection system - means handrails or similar systems that will prevent a person from falling over an edge.

Competent person - means a person found competent by virtue of training, knowledge, skill and verification (e.g. passed harness inspection training).

Documented register - means a register provided by the engineer, on paper or in electronic format that can be used to record and verify history of events such as inspections

2. PLANT AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

2.1. All working at heights equipment shall comply and be used in accordance with relevant approved design standards and manufacturers specifications.

2.2. Single person anchor points shall be capable of withstanding 1500 kg. Where it is not practical to install dedicated anchor points (i.e. Ad hoc work), anchor points capable of withstanding 1500kg shall be identified through a risk assessment process and shall be approved by a competent person prior to commencement of work.



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2.3. Where personnel are required to work within 2 meters of an opening where they could fall, they shall use personal fall restraint equipment, such as a dual lanyard provided with a fixed lanyard and an adjustable lanyard (set at a length to prevent going over the edge) and harness as a minimum, which will prevent them from falling over the edge.

2.4. Where there is potential to fall more than 2 meters, personnel shall wear appropriate personal fall arrest equipment. In such circumstances a full body harnesses, including shock-absorbing lanyard or inertia reel, is mandatory. The use of body belts for fall arrest is prohibited, except for specialised tasks such as pole-climbing belts worn by specially trained linesmen.

2.5. All forms of portable and movable elevated work platforms, suspended work cages shall conform to relevant approved design standards.

- All platforms shall be designed and approved by a competent person prior to and after erection before employees are permitted to perform work from it. Attachments for safety harnesses shall be provided.
- When work is performed from a work basket that is suspended by a crane, a wire rope sling of the correct factor shall be routed through the crane hook as an anchor point for people in the work platform basket who shall wear a correctly fitted harness attached by a lanyard to the sling routed through the crane hook.
- When work is conducted from a work basket elevated by mechanical means an anchor point shall be provided for people in the work platform basket who shall wear a correctly fitted harness attached by a lanyard to the fixed point inside the basket to restrain workers in event of a mechanical failure.
- When work is performed on a platform that has no handrails, or due to its location poses a threat that people may fall from it, a suitable anchor point shall be provided to secure people from falling.

2.6. Where there is potential to fall more than 2 meters in unprotected areas, access



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shall be restricted and controlled through on Site risk assessment.

3. PROCEDURAL REQUIREMENTS

3.1. Employees will receive on site training from the Safety Officer and Site Manager on the guidelines for the correct wearing and use of personal fall arrest and fall restraint equipment.

3.2. There shall be a work permit system in place to control all working at heights.

3.3. A documented Site risk assessment through which the risk of fall shall be eliminated where reasonably practicable utilising the Hierarchy of Controls. Such risk assessment shall be conducted before the commencement of work and at any time the scope of work changes or the risk of a fall increases. The risk assessments shall include:

- consideration for the potential of objects, as well as personnel, to fall
- selection of appropriate control measures using the hierarchy of controls
- the possibility for weather and other environmental conditions to influence the working conditions (e.g. wind, rain, snow, dust, gases, poor lighting, temperature etc.)
- selection of appropriate equipment
- selection of anchor and tie off points
- condition of supporting structures such as roofs
- selection of appropriate barricading and/or demarcation
- fall clearances i.e. length of lanyard + tear-out distance + height of user + safety margin.

3.4. All equipment shall be fit-for-purpose, numbered, colour coded (Same as Lifting



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Equipment) and checked at least monthly by a competent person in accordance with recognised standards who shall record the findings in the logbook provided by the Site Manager.

Typical equipment included in these controls is:

- Life lines
- Safety harness and lanyards
- Height safety slings
- Elevated and moveable work platforms

3.5. Where the work method requires persons to detach and re-attach at height, a dual lanyard system shall be utilised to ensure that at least one connection point is maintained at all times.

3.6. Where the use of personal fall arrest equipment is required, a person shall not work alone and there shall be other personnel in the vicinity that can raise the alarm immediately should a person fall.

3.7. Control measures should be in place to prevent tools, materials and other objects from falling from height.

3.8. Demarcation and warning signage should be placed on all lower levels where personnel or objects may fall.

3.9. Personnel operating elevated work platforms and cages shall be trained and certified for the specific equipment they are using.

3.10. The site emergency response plan/s should include plans for the rapid retrieval of personnel in the event of a fall from height i.e. response time is critical if a person is to avoid suspension trauma. Safety harnesses shall be provided with foot straps to enable the individual in suspension to step into it to release pressure whilst waiting to be rescued.



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QMRS SWP 04

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August 2011

Who Approved This Policy

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