

A GUIDE TO BUYING FALL ARREST EQUIPMENT



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INTRODUCTION

In a world of evolving legislation employers in the EU have had a legal responsibility for eliminating or reducing risks of falls since the introduction of *European Council Directive 2001/45/EC (Work at a height)*. This sets out the minimum health and safety requirements for using equipment to Work at Height, however it does not prevent EU member states from introducing more stringent measures with the result that standards do vary across different European countries.

Falls from height are generally the biggest single cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injuries in the work place. In 2014 in the UK alone falls from height were the most common cause of workplace fatalities, accounting for 29% of fatal injuries to workers (RIDBOR).

If there is any risk of falling, whatever the height, adequate measures must be taken to ensure safety. It's the responsibility of the employer to identify and plan work ensuring correct measures are in place. Any risk of falling should first be addressed using measures to eliminate falls, such as cherry pickers, scaffolding or guardrails, or by using a personal work restraint lanyard. Next nets or air bags should be considered taking into account the distance and consequence to mitigate risk.

Only then should fall protection equipment be considered and correct use is vital.

ACROSS EUROPE FALLING FROM HEIGHT IS THE NUMBER ONE CAUSE OF FATAL INJURIES TO WORKERS.

WHEN IS FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT REQUIRED AND WHY?

Fall protection is required whenever there is need for working at height, but what is actually classed as Work at Height? The classification can vary depending on the country in which the work is being carried out, but it is also important to note that employers will still be duty bound by the laws of their country of operation, even when undertaking work in another country.

EUROPE

All member states of the European Union (including the UK) must adopt and implement regulations and requirements specified within European Directives. These Directives come into force once published in the Official Journal of the EU. Member states must implement European Directives into national law within a specified timescale.

The current Directive concerning Work at Height is *European Council Directive 2001/45/EC* which sets out the minimum health and safety requirements for using equipment to Work at Height. Although this is a minimum requirement and member states can adopt more stringent safety measures, a good guide for the whole of Europe is the *Non-binding guide to good practice for implementing Directive 2001/45/EC (Work at a height)* published by the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work and available free via its bookshop.

UK

In the United Kingdom Work at Height is classed as work in any place, be it above or below ground level, where injury could occur to an employee as the result of a fall. Any Work at Height undertaken in the UK is subject to stringent regulation implemented by the Health & Safety Executive through the UK government.

US

Work at Height in the US has differing classifications according to industry sector; however, in general, fall protection equipment must be provided where the employee is working at a height of over 4 ft. The height limit increases within maritime and construction sectors. Fall protection equipment must always be provided, regardless of height, if a person is working above dangerous machinery or equipment.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's National Code of Practice for the Prevention of Falls in General Construction defines two standards for working at heights: one where the risk of falling is from a height of less than 6.6 ft (2 m) and a second where the risk of falling is from a height greater than 6.6 ft (2 m).

NEW ZEALAND

The current Work at Height regulations specify that fall prevention measures must be put in place where there is an apparent risk of a fall in excess of 9.10 ft (3 m), however fall protection equipment is required at all times if there is risk of harm from a fall – whatever the height. WorkSafe New Zealand is the health and safety government regulatory agency and publishes fact sheets on various aspects of working at height.



UK WORK AT HEIGHT LEGISLATION

- **The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:** principle legislation applicable to both employers and employees
- **The Work at Height Regulations 2005:** this implements European Council Directive 2001/45/EC concerning minimum health and safety requirements for working at height
- **The Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007:** revision of 2005 regulations
- **The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER) 1998:** occasionally a person can be classed as a 'load' under these regulations

WHY BUY FROM RS?

As industry experts we offer a wide range of fall protection equipment for most requirements and environments sourced from a range of market-leading suppliers including JSP, expert in fall arrest and recovery equipment and collaborating partner in the production of this guide. This means you can find all the products you need from one source, with next-day delivery, competitive-pricing and bulk discounts.



FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT EXPLAINED

FALL ARREST

It is not always possible to completely eliminate any risk of fall – sometimes workers require the freedom to climb or move about. In these instances, Fall Arrest Equipment might be considered.

Fall Arrest is the only category of products that actually allow a fall to take place with the system effectively arresting the fall in a controlled manner, rather than providing restraint of some sort. Where workers do need more freedom of movement – for instance when building, maintaining or dismantling structures such as scaffolding, steel frame buildings, racking systems and tower cranes – it is important to mitigate the consequences of a fall as far as possible.

Fall arrest systems work by keeping the force impact and fall distance within known limits to mitigate the risk and potential consequences of a fall from height.



WORK RESTRAINT

This category of work equipment effectively limits the movement of the user to prevent them approaching a fall hazard and creates a safe working zone.

Work restraint systems generally consist of an Anchor Point, Connecting Element and Harness – plus it is vital to have the knowledge and training to use them all safely. Once a safe working zone is in place, the worker's awareness level will decrease.



WORK POSITIONING

This type of equipment is suitable for environments where the worker needs to remain suspended at height in their work position.

Work Positioning Systems comprise of equipment to hold a worker in place to carry out a task, therefore reducing the risk of falling, and generally require a back-up secondary safety system in addition to the main work positioning system.



EN STANDARDS

Standard	Covers
EN341	Descenders
EN353-1	GuidedType Fall Arresters including a rigid anchor line
EN353-2	GuidedType Fall Arresters including a flexible anchor line
EN354	Lanyards
EN355	Shock Absorbers
EN358	Work Positioning Systems
EN360	RetractableType Fall Arresters
EN361	Full Body Harness
EN362	Connectors (Class A/B/T)
EN363	Fall Arrest Systems
EN364	Test Methods
EN365	General requirements for instructions for use, maintenance, periodic examination, repair, marking and packaging
EN795	Anchorage Devices (Class A/B/C)
EN813	Sit Harnesses
EN1496	Rescue Lifting Devices
EN1497	Rescue Harnesses
EN1498	Rescue loops
EN1891	Low stretch kernmantel loops
EN13463	Non-electrical equipment intended for use in potentially explosive atmospheres. Protection by constructional safety 'c'



GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR SELECTING SUITABLE FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Selecting adequate and suitable fall protection equipment can appear daunting at first; with so many factors to consider and so many available options it can be difficult to know where to start.

At the simplest level, the selection of protective equipment should include assessment of the following:



TRAINING FOR CORRECT USE

If fall protection equipment is not worn and used correctly it will have dire consequences, so it is vital that you have adequately trained and competent people in your organisation.

All people involved in the initial risk assessment, selection, use and maintenance (if necessary) of fall protection equipment must be trained and competent. Contact local training specialists to discuss your specific training needs.

Courses are available with key aims, such as:

- To prevent falls
- To teach good understanding of height safety and equipment methodology
- To lower or lift personnel in the event of an emergency
- To evacuate or rescue personnel from or in high structures, this includes tower cranes

ANNUAL TESTING & INSPECTION

European Standards dictate that all items of fall protection equipment for Work at Height and all safety systems undergo a periodic examination by a competent person.

Training of competent people or annual inspections can be carried out by local specialists, suppliers or manufacturers.

FALL PROTECTION ABCs

An easy reminder of the main components that make up a personal Fall Arrest System:

A

is for **Anchorage** – a secure point of attachment



B

is for **Body Support** – harnesses provide a connection point and distribute fall force



C

is for **Connectors** – to connect the anchorage with the harness using lanyards or lifelines



D

is for **Descent and Rescue** – devices for rescuing and lowering to the ground



E

is for **Education** – ensure workers are trained and competent



Identify the work involved

Work must be properly planned, supervised and carried out in as safe a manner as reasonably practicable

Have procedures for correct selection of equipment in place

Ensure equipment is being used in the correct manner

Assess the all risks and document findings

Your Risk Assessment should:

- Identify potential hazards
- Who is at risk of harm and how?
- Evaluate and decide on precautions
- Review and implement your findings
- Update original assessment as required

Carry out pre-checks

On EVERY occasion

Ensure all workers are trained and competent

If not trained, workers must be supervised by trained, competent people at all times

Have suitable rescue equipment in place

This must be in place along with enough competent, trained people to effect a rescue from height



SHOPPING THE RS RANGE: FALL ARREST HARNESSES, KITS AND EQUIPMENT

To help you find exactly what you need, we have organised our range into the following categories:

- **Fall Arrest Harnesses & Vests**
- **Fall Arrest Lanyards**
- **Fall Arrest Blocks & Lifelines**
- **Fall Arrest Karabiners, Anchor Points & Accessories**
- **Fall Arrest & Fall Recovery Kits**

Each section can then be refined using a series of specifications to filter down, selecting any or all of your requirements, making it easier to find the ideal product for you:

FALL ARREST HARNESSES & VESTS

Attachment Points	Rear Attachment	Front Attachment	Size	Type	Colour	Adjustable Leg Straps	Adjustable Shoulder Straps	Adjustable Chest Straps	High Visibility	Quick Release Buckles	Elasticated Webbing	Dielectric	Weight	Holding Tools	Standards
1	Yes	Yes	S	Harness	Black	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1570g	Yes	CE EN 361
2	No	No	M	Vest	Red	No	No	No	No	No	No	No		No	CE EN 358
3			L												

FALL ARREST LANYARDS

Type	Material	Width	Length	Weight	Harness Connection	Maximum User Weight	Anchorage Connection	Adjustable	Standards
Work Positioning	Webbing	44mm	2m	900g	Karabiner	80kg	Scaffold Hook	Yes	CE EN 354
Shock Absorbing	Rope		5m					No	CE EN 358

FALL ARREST BLOCKS & LIFELINES

Type	Length	Weight	Retractable	Material	Casing Material	Maximum User Weight	Standards
Block	5m	3.45kg	Yes	Webbing	Polymer	80kg	CE EN 360
Lifeline	20m		No	Rope	Aluminium		

FALL ARREST KARABINERS & ACCESSORIES

Type	Material	Maximum Opening	Locking	Length	Weight	Static Resistance	Standards
Karabiner	Aluminium	18mm	Screw Gate	90mm	80g	22KN	CE EN 362
Sling	Steel		Twist Lock	120mm			
Rope Grab	Alloy		Snap Gate				
Scaffold Hook							
Tower Hook							

FALL ARREST & FALL RECOVERY KITS

Kit Type	Attachment Points	Rear Attachment	Front Attachment	Kit Contents	Maximum User Weight	Length	Distance Between Legs	Maximum Height Between Legs	Maximum Load	Weight	Standards
Fall Arrest Kit	1	Yes	Yes	Harness, Lanyard, Rucksack	80kg	1.35m to 2.15m	0.8m	1.5m	100kg	12.15kg	CE EN 362
Fall Recovery Kit	2	No	No	Draw String Bag, Harness, Lanyard							
	3			Harness, Retractable Fall Limiter, Rucksack							