# TOOLBOX TALK NO.47

# Access to Height


**The Work at Height Regulations aim to prevent deaths and injuries caused each year by falls at work.**
They apply to all work at height where it is likely someone will be injured if they fall.

**Three simple rules for work at height:**

- **AVOID** work at height if you can - If you don't need to go up there, don't!!
- If work at height cannot be avoided **PREVENT** falls by selecting and using the right access equipment
- **MINIMISE** the impact of any fall. Where you cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other means to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, should one occur

All access equipment is noticeably marked as belonging to S Lucas Group. Operatives are not to loan S Lucas Group access equipment to others. No S Lucas Group operative is to loan access or other equipment from others. All access equipment is to be secured when not in use to prevent the use of unauthorized operatives or others.

**Since 2001, an average of 50 people in Great Britain have died each year as a result of a fall from height and a further 8,702 are seriously injured. Don't let a fall shatter your life!**

## Mobile Access Tower

Commonly referred to as mobile access towers or mobile scaffold towers, these structures are manufactured from prefabricated components where the principal structural materials are aluminum alloys or fibreglass. Wheels shall be locked whenever anyone is aloft. They shall be placed on sound, even surfaces only, and no closer than 1m to any opening or change in level. They shall be fitted with “scaff tags”, and be subject to recorded inspection on a weekly basis, as well as unrecorded inspection by the user before each use. Towers shall be built to specification, with outriggers as required. Only suitably qualified PASMA trained persons shall erect, alter, or dismantle aluminum towers.

## Tower Scaffolds and Stair Towers

A tower scaffold is one way to prevent a fall when working at height. The type of tower selected must be suitable for the work and erected and dismantled by people who have been trained and are competent to do so.
Those using tower scaffolds should also be trained in the potential dangers and precautions required during use.
Tower scaffold provision and use must be properly managed and include rigorous scaffold inspection arrangements.
Stair tower designs are preferable to ladders as they allow materials such as small components or tools to be safely carried onto the roof.

## Podium Steps

Podiums provide low-level height access offering a firm platform with adjustable height, and guardrail. It can be tubular self-erecting or folded prior to erection, so as to pass through standard doors and corridors. It is important to put tools and materials onto podium at ground level where possible and always close and lock the gate before starting work. The Podium design has lockable wheels and shall be locked whenever anyone is aloft. They will be placed on sound, level, even surfaces only, and no closer than 1m to any opening or change in level. They shall be fitted with "scaff tags", and be subject to recorded inspection on a weekly basis, as well as unrecorded inspection by the user before each use. Podiums shall be built to specification, with outriggers as required. Only suitably qualified PASMA trained persons shall erect, alter, or dismantle aluminum towers. Barriers to be around all podium stepped areas with signage.

### Hop up Platforms – 600mm x 600mm platforms + 150kg rated

Hop ups are low-level type platforms which are intended for low-level access requirements, typically for plastering or decorating trades. Hop up platforms are typically aluminum or wood, with a small platform providing low height access assistance. Hop ups shall be in good working order. They shall be placed on sound, level, even surfaces, and no closer than 1m to any opening or change in level. They shall be uniquely identified with a number marking, and be subject to recorded inspection on a weekly basis, as well as unrecorded inspection by the user before each use.

### Scaffolding

The site manager shall confirm that the scaff tag shows that the scaffold has been inspected and declared safe for use before allowing operatives to use it. Team members shall not make any alterations to the scaffold. If any defects with the scaffold are evident, they must be reported immediately to the supervisor and every effort made to prevent access by anyone to unsafe areas. For example, either of the following: guard rails, toe boards, fittings or planks could be missing, out of position or loose.

### Step Ladders

Step Ladders shall be in good working order. They shall be fitted with ladder "scaff tags" and be subject to recorded inspection on a weekly basis, as well as unrecorded inspection by the user before each use. Step ladders shall be used for light work and for short durations only i.e. for work that lasts no longer than 15 minutes. Step Ladders are to be constructed to Class 1 Industrial strength standard. These will be constructed of a non-conductive material when required. They shall be placed on sound, level, even surfaces, and no closer than 1m to any opening or change in level. They shall only be used when fully open. Users shall maintain 3 points of contact. The highest step on which the user shall stand shall be at least one meter from the top rail (hand hold). The step ladders must be fully extended and stays locked.

### Scissor lift

The maximum height of access is required. The operator of the MEWP shall be trained to operate a MEWP.
The machines shall be used on sound even surfaces, capable of bearing the load. The wheels shall not be placed closer than 1 meter to a leading edge. Plastic barriers will be put in place around the base of the MEWP to create an exclusion zone.
The MEWP shall be subject to a recorded daily inspection by a certified and competent person.

Before use, the trained operator shall check that the certificate of thorough inspection as required by the "LOLER regulations" is present with the machine and up to date. Before use, the trained operator shall ensure that he is fully conversant with the manufacturer's instructions, and that he is familiar with all operating and safety features of the machine. He shall also ensure that the ground support person has demonstrated understanding of the emergency descent controls. A rescue plan must be put in place.

**If you don't work at height very often or are unsure about which type of access equipment to use, it's important that you assess the risks and select the right equipment for the job**