



Fall Protection and Prevention for Working on Pitched Roofs

THE WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS (WAH) 2005 DESCRIBE WORK AT HEIGHT AS:

Work in any place, including a place at or below ground level, where if measures required by the WAH Regulations 2005 are not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. Work at Height also includes obtaining access to or egress from a place of work at height'.

THE REGULATIONS HIERARCHY

The regulations set out a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment (which is a key factor when planning) for work at height:



AVOID work at height where they can

Use work equipment or other measures to **PREVENT** falls where they cannot avoid working at height

Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to **MINIMISE** the distances and consequences of a fall should one occur

THE SELECTION OF THE CORRECT EQUIPMENT IS KEY

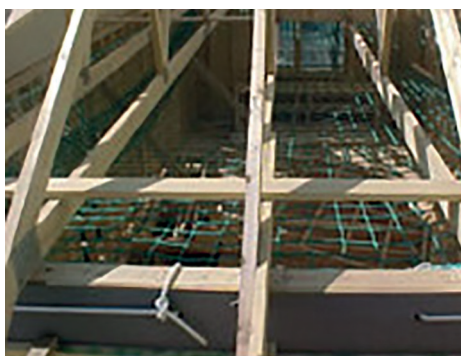
When working on a slated or tiled pitched roof NFRC recommends that a fully boarded independent scaffolding extending to the full perimeter of the building, including extended lifts at gables is the most effective method of achieving compliance with the regulations. The position and location of the working platform and its handrails must be carefully considered to ensure that all roofing works (or as much as reasonably practicable) can be undertaken without undertaking any alterations or adaptations.

The height of the perimeter scaffold from the roof eaves should ideally be 300 mm although, in some circumstances depending upon roof pitch and eaves detail, a maximum of 450 mm, taking into account that adequate protection is provided at the gables will be acceptable (see figure 1).

Contractors must also be aware that people can fall between trusses or rafters into the building during the early stages of a roofing project; the installation of battens or sarking will reduce the likelihood of falls. Where there is a risk of a fall into the roof, the hierarchy should be followed.

The NFRC therefore recommends that the home builder or main contractor does not remove any internal fall protection until it is safe to do so; ideally when the roofing works have been completed, but as a minimum when the roof has been felted, battened and completely loaded out. For more information, please see NFRC health and safety guidance sheet HSGS15.

If suitable means of fall prevention cannot be established, steps must be taken to minimise the fall distance and consequences of a fall. These steps could include high level filled bags and air (inflatable or sealed) soft landing systems or nets strategically placed below the roof area as the following photographs show:



Safety Nets



Bean Bags



Inflatable Cushions

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All of these systems provide degrees of protection, and it should be pointed out that these are examples; other methods can be employed but all should be the subject of a thorough and comprehensive risk assessment. Platform decking used as a working platform to install the roof trusses, should not be used as fall arrest equipment as injury is likely if falling from a height onto it.

Toe-boards should be a minimum height of 150 mm and brick guards will be necessary if materials such as roof slates, are stacked above toe-board height.

The maximum vertical distance from the working platform to the eaves or roof edge should be no more than 300 mm before roofing work commences.

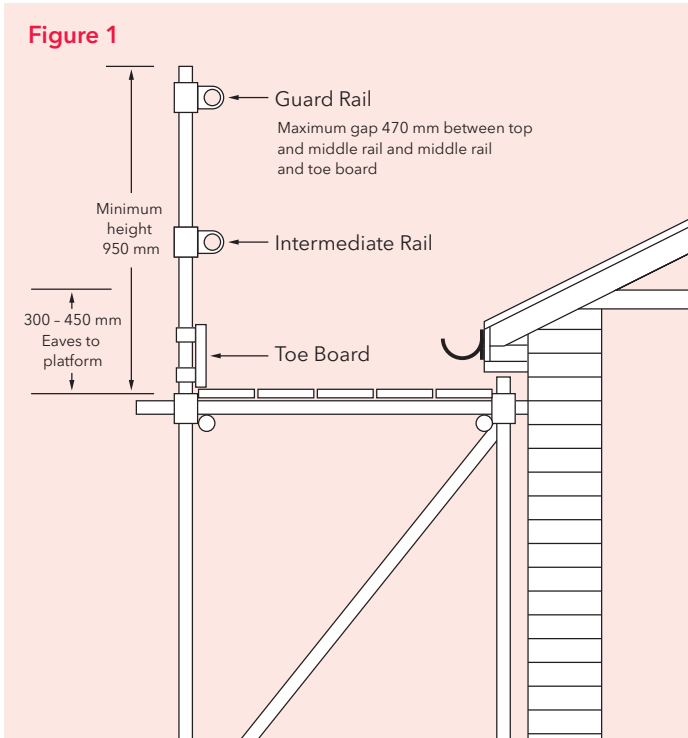
The maximum vertical distance from the working platform to the eaves or roof edge should be no more than 450 mm allowing for the finished build-up of the roofline.

The width of the working platform should be a minimum of 1.5 metres (*five scaffold boards wide*).

This document has been developed to set out the minimum requirements required by NFRC members when working on pitched roofs. However, the same requirements will apply to most roofs and should not be disregarded, as all involved have legal obligations to ensure the health and safety of all workers.

- **Failure to provide adequate training and instruction could result in an accident or prosecution.**
- **Failure to provide a safe place of work could result in an accident.**
- **Failure to comply with statutory regulations could result in prosecution.**

If you require any further information, advice or guidance regarding fall protection and prevention, contact the Helpdesk at helpdesk@nfrco.co.uk to contact a member of the NFRC Technical Team.



! Further information

Internal Fall Protection:
<https://www.faset.org.uk/guidance/general-information/>

HSE Guidance–HSG33 Health and Safety in Roof Work:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg33.pdf>

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LEADING ROOFING EXCELLENCE

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