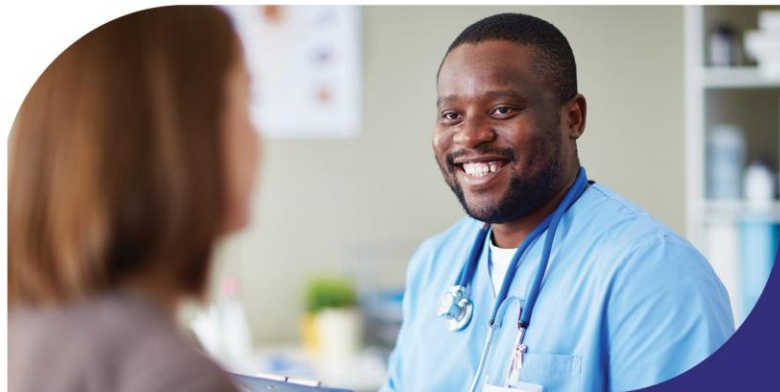




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Work at Height in Small Businesses



Eamonn O'Sullivan

March 2026

Work at Height

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Introduction

Work at Height (www.hsa.ie/slips)

Ladders

Client and s21 duties

~~Construction~~

~~Industrial Equipment~~

Next



Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007

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PART 4 WORK AT HEIGHT

- 94 Interpretation for Part 4.
- 95 Organisation, planning and risk assessment.
- 96 Checking of places of work at height.
- 97 Weather conditions.
- 98 Avoidance of risks from work at height.
- 99 Protection of places of work at height.
- 100 Selection of work equipment for work at height.
- 101 Condition of surfaces for supporting structures.
- 102 Stability of supporting structure.
- 103 Guard-rails, toe-boards, barriers, etc.
- 104 Stability of working platforms.
- 105 Safety on working platforms.
- 106 Loading of working platform and supporting structures.
- 107 Scaffolding, additional requirements.
- 108 Collective safeguards for arresting falls.
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- 110 Work positioning systems.
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Work at Height

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defined in the 2007 Regulations

access or egress,

except staircase in a permanent place of work

at or below ground,

if employee could fall distance liable to injur



Work at Height 2019 - 2021

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three-year period

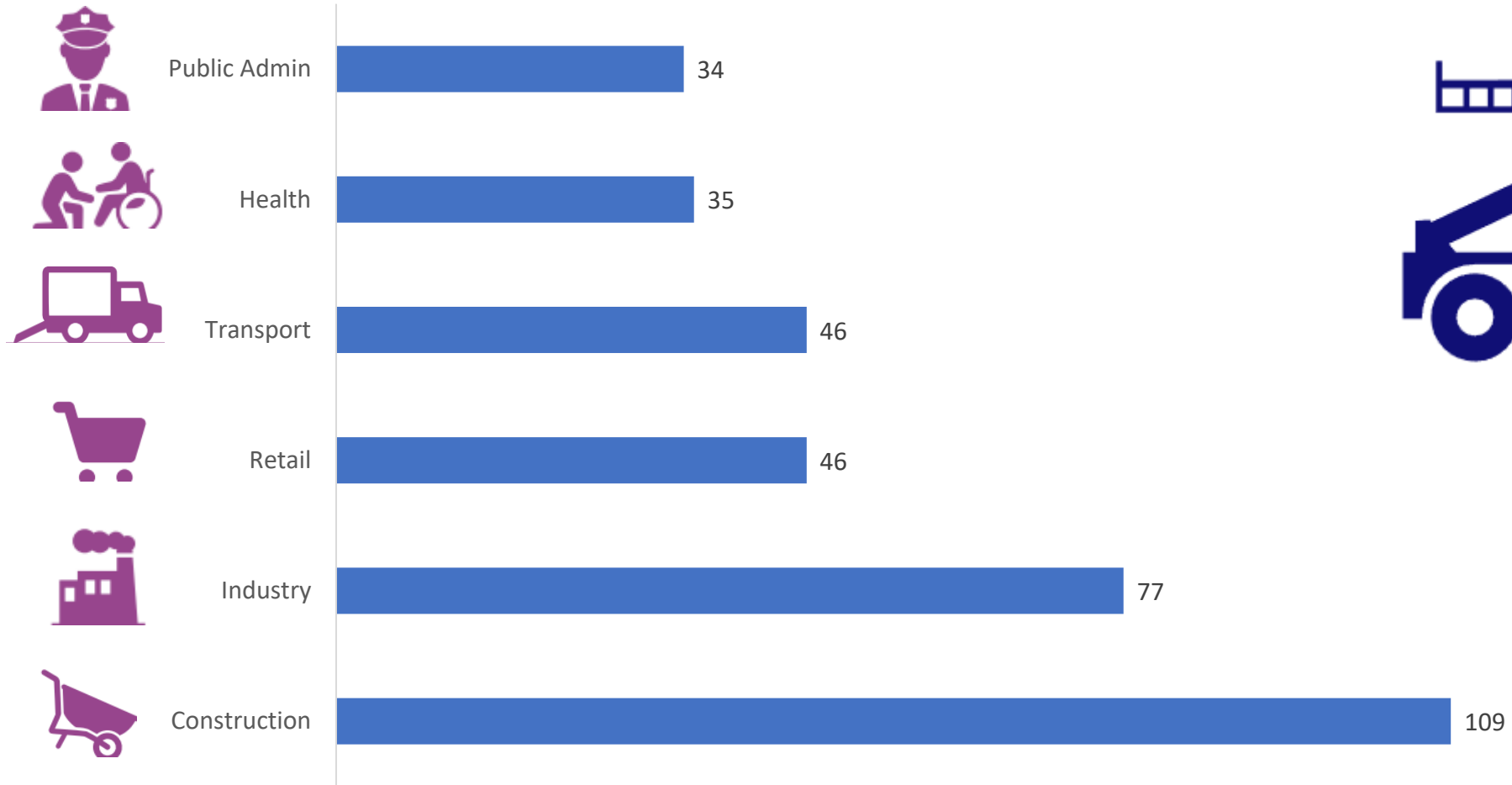
1,200+ reported

30 killed



Work at Height 2017 - 2021 HSA

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Work at Height

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Plan, organize, supervise and conduct work at height safely



Account for **weather**

Inspect equipment

Prevent injury from falling **objects**

Work at Height - ladders **HSA**

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Avoid ladders

only light, not repetitive, under 30
minutes



Ladders in good condition, on
firm level surface and tied at
top, stabilised at bottom

Work at Height

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Avoid work at height

Barriers or equipment to prevent falls

minimum 950mm high parapet wall or double handrails, including toeboards
(for example, fixed railings, podium steps, mobile elevated working platforms, scaffolding)



Risk assess

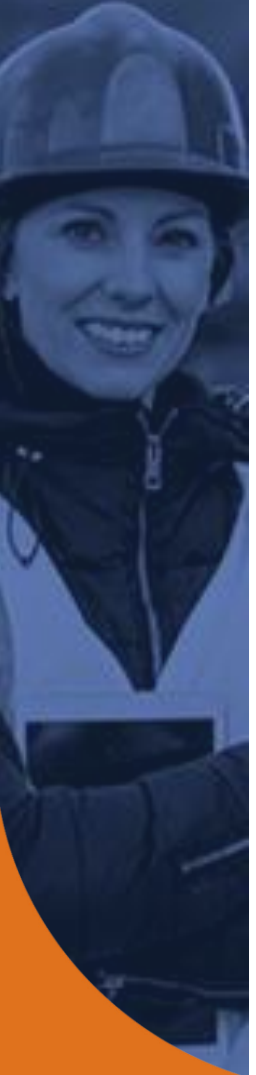
(for example, use of podium steps, ladders, scaffolding etc).

If falls not prevented, minimize injury risk

(for example, soft-landing systems, safety nets, bean bags, airbags)

Equipment protects all employees instead of only one at a time

for example, safety nets or soft-landing systems instead of safety harnesses)



Work at Height

Personal Protective Equipment + training

(for example, safety harness)

Work areas at height clear of loose materials and materials are prevented from falling

(for example, toe board or barrier at edge)

Materials not stored at height, or secured

Consider where materials stored and how to retrieve



Client Duties

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Employ **competent** designers, contractors

Appoint project supervisors

Co-operate

Keep **safety file**

Provide PSDP safety and health **plan**

Notify Authority

if construction over 500 persons days or 30 working days



Section 21 duties

Employers who share a place of work shall

co-operate

co-ordinate

inform each other and employees of risks, including

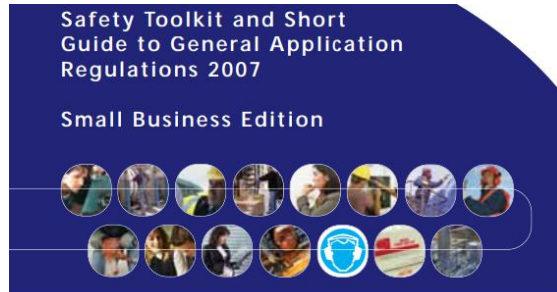
exchange of safety statements or extracts



Further Advice

www.hsa.ie

Search “Safety toolkit”



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Working at Height

These are briefing notes on the Work at Height Regulations - and some of the things you should be doing about them.

What is work at height?

Work at height is work in any place, including a place at, above or below ground level, where a person could be injured if they fell from that place. Access and egress to a place of work can also be work at height.

Examples of work activities that are classified as working at height:

- › Working on trestles
- › Working on a flat roof
- › Erecting false work or formwork
- › Working on a ladder
- › Working at ground level adjacent to an excavation;
- › Working on formwork within an excavation
- › Working near or adjacent to fragile materials

Our key messages

- › Carry out risk assessments for work at height activities and make sure that all work is Planned, Organised and carried out by a competent person
- › Follow the General Principles of Prevention for managing risks from work at height – take steps to avoid, prevent or reduce risks
- › Chose the right work equipment and select collective measures to prevent falls (such as guard rails and working platforms) before other measures which may only reduce the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or may only provide fall-arrest through personal protection equipment.

Requirements for employers

The Work at Height Regulations require employers to ensure that:

- › All work at height is properly planned and organised
- › A risk assessment is carried out for all work conducted at height
- › Appropriate work equipment is selected and used
- › People working at a height are competent
- › Equipment used for work at height is properly inspected and maintained
- › Risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled

The risk assessment should include a careful examination of what harm could be caused from working at height with a view to taking the effective steps to reduce the likelihood of this harm occurring, either through avoiding the activity or, where this is not reasonably practicable, by carrying it out in a safe manner using work equipment that is appropriate to the task and the level of risk.

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Client

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (Construction) Regulations 2013 defines 'client' as a person for whom a project is carried out. The regulations place certain duties on Clients. These duties are intended to ensure that the project is designed and constructed by competent persons.

What are the duties of a Client?

Client duties include:

- › Employ competent designers and contractors to carry out the work
- › Appointment in writing, before design work starts, of a competent and adequately resourced project supervisor for the design process (PSDP), as required.
- › Appointment in writing, before construction work starts, of a competent and adequately resourced project supervisor for the construction process (PSCS), as required.
- › Co-operate with the project supervisor and supply necessary information;
- › Keep and make available the safety file (provided by the PSDP) for the completed structure. The safety file contains information on the completed structure that will be required for future maintenance or renovation.
- › Provide a copy of the safety and health plan prepared by the PSDP to every person tendering for the project. In the case of projects on a domestic dwelling it is sufficient for the Client to provide the plan to the PSCS when they have been appointed.
- › Notify the Authority where construction is likely to take more than 500 persons days or 30 working days.

Further Information



[Guidance](#) for homeowners planning to build or renovate their home

Please

Identify work at height

Avoid work at height

Identify ladders

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Go raibh maith agaibh
Thank you

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