

# Working at Height - Personal Fall Protection Equipment

## Contents:

- 1.0 Statement of purpose/objectives
- 2.0 Scope
- 3.0 Introduction
- 4.0 Selection of equipment
- 5.0 Personal protective equipment.
- 6.0 Maintenance and use of all equipment.
- 7.0 Information, instruction and training.
- 8.0 Implementation
- 9.0 Compliance.
- 10.0 Review of arrangement.

### **1.0 Statement of purpose/objectives**

This arrangement will assist in meeting Shropshire Council objectives to value each other and achieve more by working and learning together and by using the resources we have responsibly to control any hazards related to the use of Personal Fall Protection Equipment.

### **2.0 Scope**

This arrangement applies to all Shropshire Council employees including part time, temporary staff and volunteers, who maybe required to use personal fall protection equipment.

Reference must also be made to the arrangements for working at height and personal protective equipment.

### **3.0 Introduction**

Personal fall protection equipment includes; work restraint, work positioning (rope access), fall arrest and rescue. Personal fall protection equipment can only be used if justified by risk assessment, and where it is not reasonably practical to use other safer means of access.

### **4.0 Selection of Equipment**

Selection of equipment will be determined by the circumstances of the task, e.g. a work restraint system must not be used for fall arrest.

- It must meet the relevant equipment standard, must have compatible components so that the safe function of any one component is not adversely affected by, and does not interfere with, that of another. For example, do not use an energy-absorbing lanyard to extend an inertia reel, as this will affect the inertia reel's performance.

## **5.0 Personal Protective Equipment**

Shropshire Council has a duty to make Personal Protective Equipment available free of charge if deemed necessary by the risk assessment.

## **6.0 Maintenance and use of all equipment.**

Shropshire Council has a duty to ensure that all equipment provided for use is available and is maintained in a good state of repair, periodically checked and inspected by a competent person. Shropshire Council employees must make full and proper use of any equipment provided and any other control measures provided must also be used, any defects discovered must be reported to their immediate supervisor or line manager. Defective equipment must not be used and shall be taken out of service, returned to the manufacturer for repair or destroyed.

## **7.0 Information, instruction, training and supervision**

Shropshire Council has a duty to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision to employees regarding the use of personal fall prevention equipment. The use of personal fall prevention equipment must be closely supervised to ensure that it is used correctly.

## **8.0 Implementation**

Management guidance in the form of most frequently asked questions will be provided and updated to support the implementation of the arrangement.

## **9.0 Compliance**

This arrangement will enable Shropshire Council to comply with statutory requirements and current best practice.

## **10.0 Review of arrangements**

This arrangement will be reviewed by the Occupational Health & Safety Team in two years.

### **Approving Body**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Approval | Health, Safety & Welfare Group October 2009 |
| Reviewed | Health and Safety Team – May 2016           |
| Reviewed | Health and Safety Team – May 2018           |

# **Personal Fall Protection Equipment (Work at Height).**

## **Frequently asked questions**

### **Content:**

1. Roles and responsibilities/who does what?
2. What is Personal Fall Protection Equipment?
3. What will Shropshire Council do for staff using Personal Fall Protection Equipment?
4. What are the main considerations for the safe use of fall protection equipment?
5. Will the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations or Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations apply to Personal Fall Protection Equipment?
6. What checks/records should I keep?
7. Do I require a rescue plan?
8. Access to information, advice and support.

## **1.0 Roles and Responsibilities/who does what?**

1.1 Shropshire Council as a local authority employer, through its elected members, has ultimate responsibility for compliance with Health and Safety Legislation.

### **1.2 The Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team are responsible for ensuring:**

- The implementation of the arrangement across all groups to ensure a consistency of approach.
- The allocation of suitable and sufficient resources.
- Ensuring that progress in the control and management of personal fall prevention equipment is monitored effectively.

### **1.3 Group Managers and Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring:**

- The implementation of the arrangement and that all employees are familiar with the contents of the arrangement in so far as it is relevant to their role and responsibilities.
- That managers/supervisors receive sufficient training to undertake their role.
- The allocation of sufficient group resources to effectively manage the use of personal fall prevention equipment.

### **1.4 Line Managers/Supervisors are responsible for:**

- Identifying employees who are exposed to any working at height hazards.
- Ensuring that all employees receive information, instruction and training on the management of working at height and in the selection and use of personal fall arrest equipment.
- Ensuring that any equipment used by employees is assessed and that information on appropriate work practises have been communicated to the employees.
- Ensuring that appropriate safe work practices are observed by employees.
- Reporting any issues to the Occupational Health and Safety Team.
- Ensuring that a proper assessment of any work equipment is undertaken prior to purchase or hire.

- 1.5 **The Occupational Health and Safety Team is responsible for:**
- Providing advice and guidance to managers on the selection and use of personal fall prevention equipment within their work place.

- 1.6 **All employees of Shropshire Council are responsible for:**
- Checking their personal fall protection equipment prior to use.
  - Using personal fall prevention equipment appropriately and as intended by the manufacturer.
  - Reporting any concerns about the use of personal fall protection equipment to their line manager as soon as possible, in order that remedial actions can be taken.

## 2.0 **What is Personal Fall Protection Equipment (PFPE)?**

There are several types of personal fall protection systems and equipment. Users of these systems require high levels of training and appropriate close supervision:

- **Work restraint** systems and equipment will include a lanyard which must be adjusted, or set, to a fixed length to prevent the user physically getting to a place where they could fall, eg a roof edge or fragile surface;
- **Work positioning** systems and equipment enable the user to work in tension or suspension to prevent or limit a fall, e.g. a boatswain's chair or linesman. A back-up system is needed in case the main support fails;
- **Rope access** systems use two ropes, a working rope and a safety rope, each secured to a reliable anchor. The user's harness is attached to both ropes in such a way they can get to and from the work area and the risk of falling is prevented or limited. This type of system could be used to access the side of a tall building where a cradle cannot be used;
- **Fall arrest** systems and equipment limit the impact force of a fall on the user and prevent them hitting the ground. The anchor point should be as high as possible above the feet of the user to limit the distance of the fall. Equipment should be regularly inspected for wear and damage.
- **Rescue** systems are personal protective systems where a person can rescue themselves or others by pulling, lifting or lowering.

### **3.0 What will Shropshire Council do for employees who are required to use personal fall protection equipment?**

- Shropshire Council will take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that employees required to use, Personal Fall Protection Equipment are provided with suitable training to enable them to use Personal Fall Protection Equipment safely.
- Shropshire Council will only provide quality equipment which meets or exceeds current British or European standards, is maintained in good condition and is suitable for the work undertaken.
- Shropshire Council will ensure that all equipment is appropriately marked.

### **4.0 What are the main considerations for the use of fall protection equipment?**

- Suitability - have I got the right equipment? Is it fit for purpose?
- Condition - has the equipment suffered from wear and tear? Is it fit for use?
- Traceability - do I know the history of the equipment? Has it been cared for properly?
- Compatibility - does it function effectively with other products?
- Security - is the equipment (both individual item and system) fastened properly to prevent release?
- Anchorages - are proper anchors available for intended method? (Strength and position).
- Fit - Does it fit? Am I the right size and weight for the manufacturer's specification?
- Age - has the equipment exceeded its recommended lifespan?
- Clearance - is there a safe working height to allow equipment to deploy properly?
- Selection - is the equipment suitable for use the particular situation?

### **5.0 Will the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations or Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations apply to Personal Fall Protection Equipment?**

Both the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations and the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations apply.

The main requirements of LOLER are:

- That equipment used for lifting or lowering people is safe (Reg 5).
- Lifting equipment for lifting people to be examined every six months by a competent person if it is exposed to conditions causing deterioration which is liable to result in dangerous situations (Reg 9).

## 5.1 **Guidance on inspecting eyebolts used for personal fall protection purposes**

All new class A1 anchors must be tested, examined, marked and certified to BS EN 795. In addition, installed eyebolts must be installed, tested, examined, marked and certified in accordance with BS7883.

## 5.2 **What are Class A1 anchor devices?**

- *Class A1 anchor devices, often referred to as 'eyebolts' or 'windows cleaners' eyebolts', comprise structural anchors designed to be secured to vertical, horizontal and inclined surfaces, e.g. walls, columns, lintels.*
- *Most Class A1 anchors supplied in the UK consist of two elements. The 'eyebolt' and a 'structural anchor'. The structural anchor is fixed into the structure typically using resin. An expanding anchor can also be used as a structural anchor. They are supplied in two parts to enable the eyebolt to be removed for inspection.*
- *They are generally used as single user attachment points, but can be used for Rope Access when used in pairs.*

## 5.3 **Periodic examinations of anchors**

- *Periodic examinations are required at intervals of no more than 12 months for fall arrest and 6 months for rope access. For anchor devices used infrequently they may be used if they have been examined within the last 12 (6) months*

## 6.0 **What checks/records should I keep?**

**Pre-use checks** - are essential and should be carried out each time, before the equipment is used.

Pre-use checks should be tactile and visual. Check the whole length of the lanyard. This should be done, by passing it slowly through the hands (eg to detect small cuts of 1 mm in the edges, softening or hardening of fibres, ingress of contaminants). N.B. This check should be undertaken in good light and will normally take a few minutes to complete.

**Detailed inspections** must be carried out every six months

**Interim inspections** should be carried out every 3 months, dependant on the conditions the equipment is used in. N.B: The inspection interval may also be specified by the equipment manufacturer.

## 7.0 **Do I require a rescue plan?**

Yes, it is essential that a rescue plan is prepared and staff trained in the use of the rescue equipment. The need for a rapid response in the event of a rescue or evacuation should be borne in mind whilst preparing the rescue plan.

The survival of an injured person often depends on the speed of recovery.

## 8.0 **Further information and references.**

- The Health and Safety Executive [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)
- The Work at Height Safety Association [www.wahsa.co.uk](http://www.wahsa.co.uk)
- The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

- Working at Height Regulations (WAHR).
- Health and Safety in Roofwork HS(G) 33
- HSE INDG 367 Inspecting Fall Arrest Equipment
- The Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations (LOLER).
- The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER).
- The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Regulations 1992 (as amended).
- BS EN 361:2002, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Full body harnesses.
- BS EN 365:2004, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height - General requirements for instructions for use, maintenance, periodic examination, repair, marking and packaging.
- BS EN 358:2000, Personal protective equipment for work positioning and prevention of falls from a height – Belts for work positioning and restraint and work positioning lanyards.
- BS EN 362:2004, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height – Connectors.
- BS EN 363:2008, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height - Fall arrest systems.
- BS EN 364:1993, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height - Test methods.
- BS EN 365:2004, Personal protective equipment against falls from a height - General requirements for instructions for use and for marking.
- Personal Fall Protection Equipment – Anchor Devices
- BS EN 795:2012 – Anchor Devices