

TAPAK SELAMAT

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Work at Height

Definition



Existing legislation in Malaysia does not provide specific definition to work at height.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 in UK defined work at height as

- a. work in any place where, including a place at or below ground level;
- b. obtaining access to or egress from such place while at work, except by a staircase in permanent workplace,

where, if measures requires by these Regulations were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

It is noteworthy that a distance liable to cause personal injury is not prescribed in this interpretation.

Prescribed Distance



The prescribed distance in regulation differs among countries. For example, a regulation in Malaysia¹ prescribed this distance as 10 feet, while in the UK² and Australia³, the prescribed distance is 2 meters. In New Zealand⁴, the prescribed distance is 3 meter. The prescribed distance is no longer enforced in the UK.

¹ refer regulation 12, the Factories and Machinery (Safety, Health and Welfare) Regulations 1970

² refer sub-regulation 6(3), the Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996

³ refer regulation 291, the Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011

⁴ refer regulation 21, the Health and Safety in Employment Regulations 1995

Variance



Despite the discrepancies between the prescribed distance, the purpose of the regulations are the same which is to prevent personal injury to workers. Fall from a height of prescribed distance has been classified as high risk³, and most likely to cause personal injury.

This distance can be associated with the probability of worker getting injured and the severity of injury if fall from a height of prescribed distance. The probability is influenced by past accident information, physical size of workers and condition of landing area.

Therefore, this discrepancy may be due to the different results of risk assessment conducted by respective countries at the time the regulations were prepared.

It must be noted that each regulation requires employer to take prescribed measures if risk assessment shows workers are liable to fall at prescribed distance.

Notes



It does not imply that the employer can do nothing if the risk of falling distance is less than the prescribed distance.

The decision on suitable control measures to take must be based on the risk assessment.

For example, is the danger of fall is less than 10 feet, but there are protruding nails on the falling surface, then the employer must take suitable measures to protect workers from other hazard.