

Health & Safety Briefing Note

Incident Learning – Falls from height



HSBN 0091
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Introduction

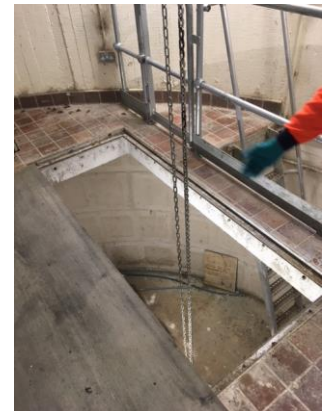
Falls from height are one of the **biggest causes of workplace fatalities and life changing injuries** that affect not only the injured person but also their families too. **Work at height** means any activity where, if there are no controls or precautions in place, a person(s) could fall a distance likely to cause personal injury. For example you are working at height if you:

- Are working on a ladder or a flat roof
- Could fall through a fragile surface
- Could fall into an opening in a floor, or a hole in the ground



What happened?

On 15th of April, three of our colleagues were removing a pump from a dry well in one of sewage pumping stations. To do so required the team to remove the cover which was identified as a hazard by the team prior to starting the task. The void through which they removed the pump had been partially covered but not fully protected and one of the technicians appears to have fainted and fell through the void approximately 2mtrs to the floor of the dry well. He was taken to hospital conscious and was discharged later that night suffering from muscle injuries.



When an unsafe condition is identified after completing a SHE5 risk assessment you MUST stop work and report to your line manager.



Action required

Suitable and sufficient control measures must be in place when working at height; edges must be protected with barriers, voids covered or work positioning systems in place to prevent persons falling into voids. If no control measures can be practically deployed, **all works must be stopped** and **reported to your line manager**.

- **Avoid** work at height where is reasonably practicable to do so
- Where work at height cannot be avoided, **prevent falls** using barriers / edge protection or through use of work positioning systems that prevent you reaching the edge or void
- **Minimise** the distance and consequences of the fall, using equipment such as fall arrest or fall nets and put suitable control measures and safe systems of work in place

Remember Zero Compromise – you have the right to stop all work activity that you believe is unsafe.

