

TEMPORARY WORK PLATFORMS

This fact sheet will help you select and use temporary work platforms for working at height safely.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TEMPORARY WORK PLATFORMS?

Temporary work platforms (TWP) provide a place to work when working at height. They are most often used for work under 5 m.

Temporary work platforms include:

- > scaffolding
- > trestles, podium, folding and step-up platforms
- > constructed temporary work platforms
- > step platforms.

All platforms must have a guardrail in place where there is a risk of a fall that will cause harm.

Working at height means working in a place where a person could be injured if they fell from one level to another. Rather than thinking about how high the fall will be, consider how someone could fall and what they might land on.

WHICH TWP SHOULD I USE?

Use the information below to help you select and use the right TWP for the job.

Ensure that workers are trained and have suitable experience with the types of TWP being used.



Photo courtesy of Staffy

Scaffolding

- > Scaffolding is the most common type of TWP for working at height.
- > Scaffolding must have guardrails, including midrails and toe boards, on the exposed sides and at the end of all working platforms, regardless of height.
- > Ensure the minimum width of the working platform is 675 mm and maintains unobstructed access of 450 mm.
- > Scaffolding must be erected, altered and dismantled by workers who have been trained and have suitable experience. If the highest component will be 5 m or more above the ground, it must be erected by a certified scaffolder, ie a holder of an appropriate certificate of competency.
- > The erection or dismantling of scaffolding from which someone can fall 5 m or more must be notified to WorkSafe. (Note: the measurement is taken from the highest platform for notification purposes.)
- > The *The Good Practice Guide for Scaffolding* provides further information.

Trestles and stools

- > Only suitable for short duration work (ie work is work that be completed in minutes rather than hours, such as inspections, replacing a few tiles etc) or light-duty work, such as plastering, painting, general fit-out and finishing.
- > Only use when alternative controls such as other types of scaffolding or elevating work platforms are not practicable.
- > Use trestle scaffolds with a guardrail system as per the manufacturer's instructions. Only use trestle scaffolds without a guardrail system when there is a low likelihood of a person falling and injuring themselves, ie for short duration work and low-level work.
- > They should not be used where a person or object can fall more than 2 m.
- > Trestle scaffolds that are self-supporting stands, including horizontal members designed to support one end of a light-duty work platform, must be designed and constructed to comply with AS/NZS 1576.5 Prefabricated splitheads and trestles or other accepted international standards.

Podium, folding and step platforms

- > These platforms are intended for short duration and interior work.
- > If used outside on soft ground, soleboards are required to keep the platform stable.
- > Use with a guardrail system as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- > A step platform is a more stable and safer alternative to a stepladder, especially where the task involves working at height for extended periods or with restricted vision (eg welding).

- > Some models are collapsible and should comply with AS/NZS 1892.1 Portable ladders, metal.

Constructed temporary work platforms

- > Only build your own temporary work platform where there is no alternative work platform available.
- > Only use suitable construction material, ie never construct working platforms from pallets, bricks, concrete blocks, buckets or barrels, furniture, nail boxes, or packing crates.
- > Ensure the platform is constructed or supervised by competent and skilled tradesmen.
- > Ensure guardrails, toe boards, and midrails are in place.
- > Ensure the platform can safely support workers, material, and plant necessary to complete the work.
- > Ensure the minimum width of the working platform is 675 mm and maintains unobstructed access of 450 mm.



Podium platform with guardrail on three sides



Folding platform (with guardrail)

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This fact sheet is part of the *Working Safely at Height Toolkit* that supports the Best Practice Guidelines for Working at Height in New Zealand.

- > Fact Sheet 1: Planning a safe approach to working at height
- > Fact Sheet 2: Selecting the right equipment for working safely at height
- > Fact Sheet 3: Short duration work at height

- > Fact Sheet 4: Edge protection
- > **Fact Sheet 5: Temporary work platforms**
- > Fact Sheet 6: Total restraint system

For additional guidance on safe working at height see:

- > Be Safe Working on Roofs
- > Safe Working with Ladders and Stepladders
- > Health and Safety In Contracting Situations