

SAFETY ALERT

Falls from Height



ISSUE

Falls from height.

RELEVANT AGGA SWMS'

- Work at Height

DESCRIPTION

There have been a number of deaths and serious injuries on construction sites, associated with performing work at height.

A recent example in WA involved a worker falling 13 storeys after removing her safety harness only moments before.

The worker stopped work and removed her harness and put it aside. She saw something small that she hadn't finished and went back and stood on a drum to reach up and fix it. That toppled over and she fell down a shaft.

Falls from ladders, steps and stairways make up the largest group of falls statistics. The next most prominent category is falls from vehicles.

RECENT SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTIONS INCLUDE:

NSW

- a worker suffered serious injuries when he fell approximately 12 metres from unguarded scaffolding
- a worker suffered injuries when he fell approximately three metres from the roof of a flat under construction
- a worker was fatally injured from a 5 metre fall through a penetration at a construction site

Queensland

- a 22-year-old worker seriously injured after falling 10m through a hatchway
- a worker of a sub-contractor fell from the second level of scaffolding. The 'hop up' bracket had been removed, creating a void that had been covered over by a piece of plywood
- workers on a high set roof without fall protection in place
- working from a ladder, without due consideration for higher order controls

SA

- employee suffered fractures to his spine and torn ligaments in his neck after falling 2 storeys through a stairwell. The employer failed to ensure that the void was covered

Victoria

- a worker fell down an unguarded stairwell on a construction site, resulting in internal injuries.
- a worker fell 2m from a work platform and suffered severe spinal injuries and a fractured skull
- no fall protection on a scaffold at a height of 3.2 metres
- a 20m fall resulting in death at a Carlton construction site
- a 2-storey fall resulting in death
- non-compliance with the SWMS relating to a 2.1m scaffold
- 3.1m scaffold with top and mid rails missing, kickboards not installed, and an unsecured ladder being used to access the scaffold

THIS LIST IS NOT COMPREHENSIVE. FURTHER DETAILS OF PROSECUTIONS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM YOUR STATE'S REGULATOR'S WEBSITE.

CONTROL / RESOLUTION

For all tasks involving work at height above 2m, an SWMS **must be** completed and followed explicitly.

The following controls must be considered in the order specified, and applied if practicable - flow chart over page.

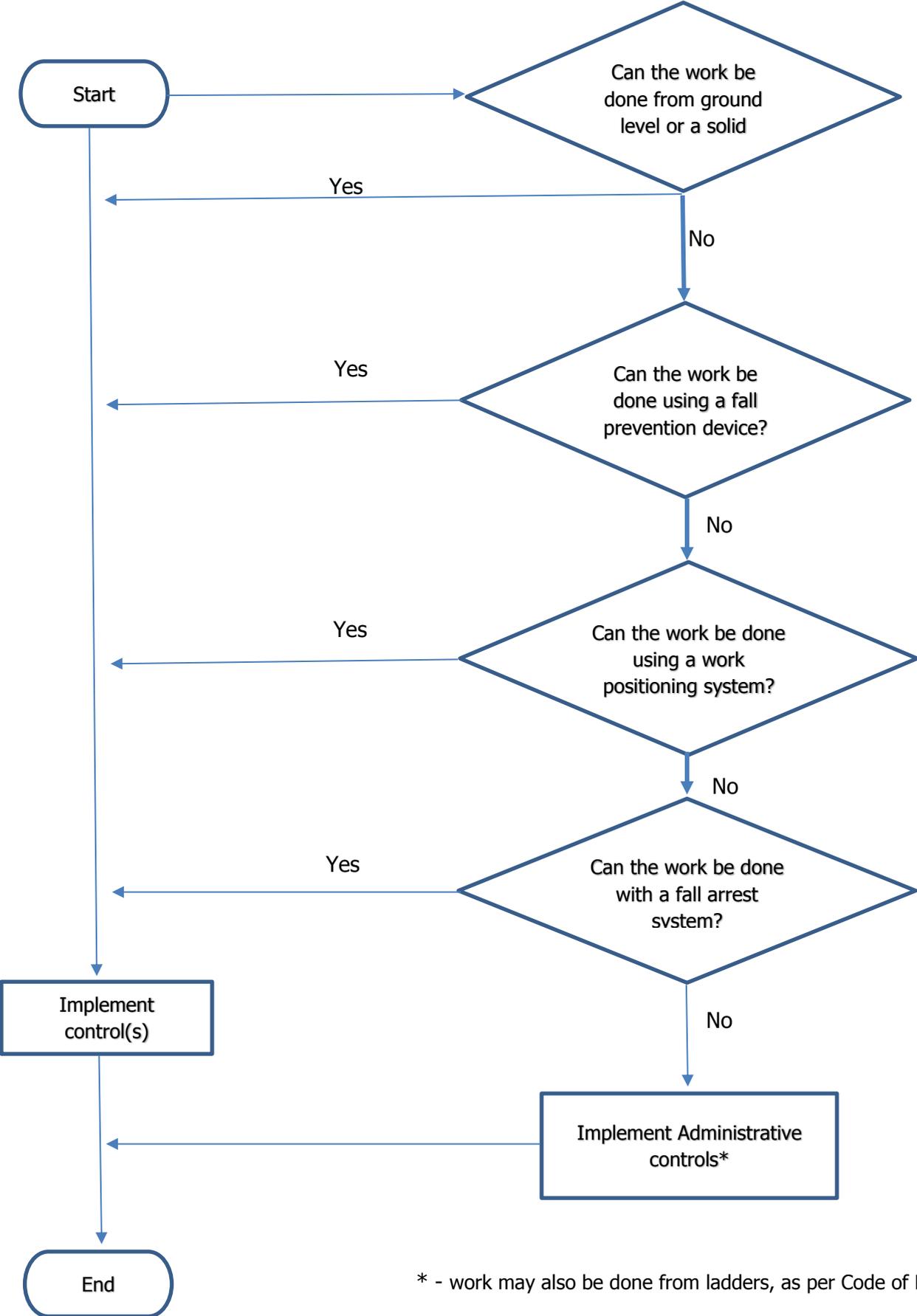
1. Carry out any work that involves the risk of a fall on the ground or on a solid construction
2. Carry out the work using a fall prevention device.
3. Carry out the work using a work positioning system.
4. Carry out the work using a fall arrest system if it is not reasonably practicable to provide a fall prevention device or a work positioning system.
5. If a risk remains after considering all of the control measures listed above, you must implement administrative controls. The work may also be undertaken from ladders as per relevant code of practise.

Failure to provide an SWMS or to apply the specified controls in the order listed is a breach of the legislation.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this document is current at the time of publication. It is intended as a general guide only and AGGA recommends that you undertake your own assessments when identifying controls for WHS issues.

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WORK AT HEIGHT CONTROLS



* - work may also be done from ladders, as per Code of Practice

For the controls to be effective, procedures should be developed on how to correctly install, use, inspect and maintain the control measure.