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www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety

Revised and reissued June 2011

This publication is available on request in other formats for people with special needs.

NRS: 13 36 77

For publication orders

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The advice provided in this pamphlet is basic safety and health information. Ensure you are familiar with your site procedures and, if uncertain, discuss this information with your supervisor and safety and health representative.

Mine safety matters

Working at height



THE HAZARDS

Most mines in Western Australia have locations on the surface or underground where people are required to work at height, or where there is a risk of falling from a level or into openings.

There may also be the risk of dropping material onto people working below.

WHAT CAN HAPPEN

Falls in the workplace can range from less than one metre to hundreds of metres. The injuries from any of these falls can range from minor cuts and bruises to death.

People working below may be injured by falling equipment or displaced material.

SAFE WORK PRACTICES

- Ensure elevated work platforms are fitted with secure handrails and a gate, and that any decking is not loose, damaged or obstructed
- Before working at height, identify all hazards, assess their risks and prepare a safe work procedure
- While fall-arrest equipment will be essential for some tasks, always consider what other measures can be taken to eliminate the task or the risk of falling
- Only work at height if you have had proper instruction and training, and, where required, you have the proper certification, such as a rigger's or scaffolder's ticket or relevant "working at height" certification
- Review the work procedure when carrying out the task and make changes as appropriate
- If working from an elevated work platform or a work platform fitted to a mobile machine, ensure the platform is correctly secured to the machine and that you are wearing fall-arrest equipment
- Ensure the machine is located on stable ground and erect barriers to keep the working area clear
- Ensure you are aware of and follow all workplace policies and procedures
- Secure fall-arrest equipment to designated anchor points in the work area, preferably anchor points above the head to limit fall distance. Never use handrails as anchor points
- Make sure all fall-arrest equipment is correctly selected, fitted and well maintained, and that people are trained in its correct and safe use. Never use damaged or obviously worn equipment
- Ensure all tools and loose materials are either in a position where they cannot fall on others, or are secured to the person or platform to prevent falling
- Place signage and barricades in access areas where people are working at height, particularly in places directly below the work area
- Establish employee exclusion zones where areas at risk from falling objects cannot be effectively barricaded
- Barricades around the immediate work area may be required to ensure unprotected people do not enter the area
- Ensure anyone working at height has adequate supervision at all times
- Have a rescue plan and resources available in case of an accident

For further advice, refer to regulation 4.4 — Guards and Handrails and regulation 4.5 — Fall Arrest Equipment of the Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995, Australian / New Zealand Standard *AS/NZS 1891 Industrial Fall Arrest Systems and Devices*.

Safe working practices are also covered in the *Vertical Opening Safety Practice in Underground Mines* guideline available at www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety, and *Prevention of falls at workplaces* code of practice published by the WA Commission of Occupational Safety and Health.

Working at height

