

Fatal 3 - Contractor seriously injured injured in fall from forklift truck

WHAT HAPPENED

A 41-year-old contractor sustained life changing injuries after falling from a tipping bucket attached to a forklift truck whilst dismantling pipework at a construction site. The planned MEWP / scissor lift was unable to access the work area, and an unsuitable alternative was used instead. The injured person fell from the raised bucket onto the concrete floor below, suffering injuries that have permanently affected his mobility and quality of life.

KEY FINDINGS

- The work at height activity had not been adequately planned or managed.
- An unsuitable item of work equipment was used when the planned access equipment could not be used.
- No alternative safe system of work was developed before work commenced.
- Training, supervision and contractor management arrangements were inadequate.
- Workers were allowed access to equipment without suitable instruction or controls.

The image below shows Forklift truck used with the bucket in the background



Falls from height remain the leading cause of workplace fatalities in Great Britain, accounting for more than a quarter of all worker deaths. HSE statistics show that 31 workers lost their lives due to falls from height during 2025/26.

LEARNING POINTS / ACTIONS TAKEN

HOW COULD THIS HAVE BEEN AVOIDED?

- Planning the work thoroughly and ensuring suitable Risk Assessments and Method Statements (RAMS) are in place before work starts.
- Briefing the workforce so hazards, controls and responsibilities are understood and concerns and suggestions can be raised.
- Using the correct access equipment for the task and never accepting unsafe alternatives or shortcuts.
- Ensuring work equipment is suitable, well-maintained and used only by trained and competent persons.
- Providing appropriate fall prevention and fall protection measures.
- Maintaining effective supervision to ensure controls are implemented and followed..

KEY REVIEW POINTS:

- Are work at height activities properly planned, risk assessed and supported by suitable RAMS?
- Have the workforce been briefed and given the opportunity to challenge or improve the proposed method?
- Is the safest and most suitable access equipment available and being used?
- Are equipment inspection, maintenance and competence requirements being met?
- Are supervisors routinely verifying that safe systems of work are being followed?
- Do employees feel empowered to stop work, speak up and challenge unsafe conditions or behaviours?

For more details, refer to the HSE Press Release:: [Company fined after worker seriously injured in fall from height](#)

LOCATION:	CONSTRUCTION/DELIVERY SITE	ALERT STATUS:	Normal
ACTIVITY:	WORKING AT HEIGHT	DATE ISSUED:	03/09/2026 01:26:23
SUB ACTIVITY:	SSOW	INCIDENT No:	04982