

## SAFE USE OF TRESTLES & HOP-UP'S

### BACKGROUND

This best practice paper has been developed alongside members of the HBF Health and Safety Forum and the Health and Safety Executive. Its purpose is to highlight the key objectives required by the Work at Height Regulations in relation to Trestles and Hop-up platforms.

The [Work at Height Regulations 2005 \(WAHR\)](#) set out the basic principles for safe working at height, notably the regulations apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause any personal injury, and this does apply to Trestles and Hop-up platforms. The historical division between low and high falls no longer exists and the importance is to prevent/reduce the risk of falls.

CDM 2015 requires that this starts with designing out risks that would ultimately avoid working at height where reasonably practicable. WAHR sets out a clear hierarchy of control and where Trestles and Hop-ups are to be used, then the starting point must be to consider edge protection, and where that is not reasonably practicable, to mitigate the distance and consequences of a fall. If this is not reasonably practicable then other precautions might be appropriate and will be determined by suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Members of the HBF Health and Safety Forum are keen to set out the safe use of Trestles and Hop-up platforms within clearly defined parameters that all members agree and sign up to, ensuring that the measures are reasonable, practical and consider all other site safety factors as highlighted within this paper. It is relevant to share best practice and to demonstrate that due consideration has been carried out as to their appropriate use.

It is essential that a sensible and pragmatic approach is taken when addressing low level applications and therefore the scope and the duration of the work must be assessed as to the risk of injury.

It must be understood at the outset that the default position for the use of Trestles and Hop-up platforms, if assessed safe to use without guardrails (following the assessment criteria set out below) is that the height would be limited to a maximum of 600mm. This paper sets out the key assessment considerations that might justify (if it has been shown that edge protection or other fall mitigation methods are not reasonably practicable) the non-use of guard and/or handrails around each individual site operation and which would go towards ensuring the safe use of the equipment.

If you require any further information on this paper, please contact - [info@hbf.co.uk](mailto:info@hbf.co.uk).

### WORKING AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS – KEY PRINCIPLES

The key principles of the regulations are to ensure that both employers and those carrying out the work have considered the following:

- all of the work at height has been properly planned and organised;
- a risk assessment is carried out for all of the work conducted at height;

- the appropriate work equipment is selected and used;
- people working at a height are competent to do so;
- the equipment used for work at height is properly inspected and maintained;
- the risks associated with the equipment during erection, maintenance and dismantling of such equipment are taken into account.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

This paper will seek to assist those carrying out the Risk Assessment to ensure a well informed and considered analysis has been carried out. Any work at height must be planned in advance of the work activity and careful consideration given to the correct selection and use of the work equipment to ensure that the safest system of work has been adopted.

Prior to the use of standard Trestles or Hop-ups, a Risk Assessment must be carried out to determine if the proposed controls are adequate. The notes set out below are intended to assist with the assessment of the task and suitability of the work access equipment intended to be used.

The first question that should be answered must always be, is it appropriate to use a Trestle or Hop-up platform for the nature of the work to be carried out?

### Environment/Task

1. Is the work at height no more than 600mm maximum?
2. Is the ground solid, compact, level and stable?
3. Is there any risk to other people working in the area?
4. Is the Trestle or Hop-up next to, or adjacent a trench increasing the height of the potential risk?
5. Are there any other obstructions or hazards e.g. reinforcing bars etc. next to, or adjacent the Trestle /Hop-up?
6. Ensure that materials temporarily placed on the working platform to carry out your task(s) do not compromise your ability to work safely.
7. Is there any risk to the public?

### Equipment

1. Has the equipment been inspected and had a weekly inspection report carried out?
2. Is there any risk posed by the installation, use and dismantling of the work equipment?
3. Is there a risk to the potential loadings from persons, equipment and materials?
4. Is the equipment free from a build-up of debris, i.e. mortar?
5. Are the rubber pads to the bottom feet of the hop-up damaged or missing?
6. Has a ladder, to BS EN131, or other suitable access been provided, and has it been suitably tied?
7. Has the equipment been erected to the manufacturer's instructions?

## TYPES OF EQUIPMENT

As highlighted, it must be understood at the outset that the default position for the use of Trestles and Hop-up platforms is limited to 600mm.



Note that the Europe wide classification has now replaced the old British Class II Ladder Standard. Within the UK this classification is known as BS EN131. Ladders of this type are most suitable for commercial light trade work up to a maximum load of 150kg.

Note that BS 2482 specifies requirements for timber scaffold boards with a width of 225mm providing a minimum of 675mm wide platform.

Two grades for 38 mm thick scaffold boards, as follows:

- a. 1.2m support centre - a grade that is suitable for support at centres up to 1.2m, which may be selected by visual or machine strength grading.
- b. 1.5m support centre - a grade that is suitable for support at centres up to 1.5m, which may only be selected by machine strength grading.

A single grade for 63mm thick scaffold boards that is suitable for support at centres up to 2.5m, which may be selected by visual or machine strength grading.

## INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING

Training is an essential component to the safe use of Trestles and Hop-ups on site, to demonstrate appropriate use of the selected system and where relevant the erection, use and dismantling of trestle systems. Employees on site must be made aware of the safe systems of work when working at any height.

When using either a Trestle or Hop-up, the equipment must be moved into a new position rather than risk overreaching for access and subsequently losing your balance and do not carry items with both hands when mounting the equipment.

Information, Instruction and Training should be delivered to erectors, users and inspectors of the equipment and should include details of any relevant guidance standards and/or manufacturer's instructions.

The content and duration of the training will depend on the equipment being used, but in general this can be achieved via documented on-site tool box talks which should record the details of individuals who have received the training.

Trestles and Hop-up platforms are very straightforward to use, however the manufacturer's instructions that came with the equipment must be read and the user familiar with its operation. If not sure, the advice from the supervisor must be sought.

## INSPECTION OF EQUIPMENT

Work equipment must be inspected, by someone who is competent to do so, after assembly and before use. For equipment that does not need to be assembled, it still needs to be checked before use.

A minimum of weekly report of inspection should be carried out on the Trestle system and/or Hop-up. The inspection report should include the following information.

A report of inspection should include:

1. The name and address of the person for whom the inspection was carried out;
2. The location of the work equipment inspected;
3. A description of the work equipment inspected;
4. The date and time of the inspection;
5. Details of any matter identified that could give rise to a risk to the safety or health of any employee;
6. Details of any action taken as a result of any matter identified;
7. Details of any further action considered necessary;
8. The name and position of the person making the report.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

The Work at Height Regulations will provide you with more detailed information. It is available by clicking on the links below with other relevant guidance:

- [Work at Height Regulations 2005 \(WAHR\)](#)
- [The HSE Working at Height - A Brief Guide](#)
- [The HSE Working at Height Step by Step Guide](#)
- [HSE Risk Assessment - A Brief Guide to Controlling Risks in the Workplace](#)

<b>TRESTLE AND HOP-UP HANDY SITE GUIDE ASSESSMENT</b>	
<b>Environment/Task</b>	
1.	Is the work at height no more than 600mm maximum?
2.	Is the ground solid, compact, level and stable?
3.	Is there any risk to other people working in the area?
4.	Is the Trestle or Hop-up next to, or adjacent a trench increasing the height of the potential risk?
5.	Are there any other obstructions or hazards e.g. reinforcing bars etc. next to, or adjacent the trestle /hop up?
6.	Ensure that materials temporarily placed on the working platform to carry out your task(s) do not compromise your ability to work safely.
7.	Is there any risk to the public?
<b>Equipment</b>	
1.	Has the equipment been inspected and had a weekly inspection report carried out?
2.	Is there any risk posed by the installation, use and dismantling of the work equipment?
3.	Is there a risk to the potential loadings from persons, equipment and materials?
4.	Is the equipment free from a build-up of debris, i.e. mortar?
5.	Are the rubber pads to the bottom feet of the hop up damaged or missing?
6.	Has a ladder, to BS EN131, or other suitable access been provided, and has it been suitably tied?
7.	Has the equipment been erected to the manufacturer's instructions?