



**BULLETIN  
ON ACCESS  
HATCHES**

## SAFETY ALERT ON FALLS FROM HEIGHT ON UPPER FLOORS IN HOUSE BUILDING AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION

There have been two recent serious incidents where individuals have received life changing injuries resulting from inadequate and unplanned access arrangements on the upper floors of construction sites. In both cases, although the floors appeared complete, alterations had taken place in the upper floors but inadequate planning, design and control measures resulted in arrangements that were unsafe, leading to the falls.

The floors were simply cut out but were not provided with adequate support; and were of a size big enough to allow the person to fall through. The resulting falls were from 2.5 metres onto a concrete floor. In both cases the faults were not immediately visible and a failure to appropriately sign and advise the site operatives of their presence, or put adequate control measures in place resulted in the falls and therefore the significant life changing injuries.

FASET therefore strongly recommends the following actions be taken:-

**On upper floors of New Build Houses or other construction, during erection and dismantle of Platform Decking Systems, there are *Falls From Height* risks, which must be managed.**

- Upper floor Timber Floors are still temporary until fully completed and should be part of the main contractors' site inspection/quality and monitoring control process and Temporary Works Register.
- Any alterations to upper floors should be adequately designed by a competent Temporary Works Designer and signed off by the Temporary Works Co-ordinator prior to any access. This includes the provision of access hatches for materials and personnel and/or BS EN 13374 Class A temporary edge protection systems.
- In accordance with BS 5975 (Temporary Works Standard), all temporary access arrangements should be checked and handed over as compliant by a competent person prior to works commencing.
- Site management should plan the works so that Decking Installers' safety requirements are considered prior to works commencing, including safe access to and on upper floors.

### So what do I need to do?

#### Site Managers, Project Managers & Deputies Responsibilities

- Ensure the presence of any temporary hatch arrangements is communicated to the workforce, including platform decking installers.
- Ensure you are personally aware of, and comfortable with your risk control arrangements.
- Ensure the control systems are adequate.
- Ensure that any temporary hatch or edge protection has been checked to be in accordance with any Temporary Works Design.

#### Supervisors

- Review this activity and identify workers at risk, ensure you are clear what controls should be in place
- Hold a discussion with your work teams and highlight the specific dangers of this activity
- Ensure all controls are workable, communicated, in place and maintained – STOP the work if not

#### Installers

- Ensure this brief is communicated to you, understand the controls and use them
- Provide ideas or input that could make the job safer and STOP work if you feel it is unsafe

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**What you should do (Installing Decking Systems, founded on upper floors):**

- Be fit for work and always receive a pre-start briefing – if unsure **STOP**
- Receive site induction, ensure you are fully briefed on the RAMS, and work to your training and handbook/user manual.
- Confirm with client's Site Manager that the upper floor has been finished, is free from defects, and is safe to work on.
- Check! Stand on the ground floor, look up at the floor above and check for any obvious defects (like floor panels twisted).
- Always use ladder hatches to gain access onto the upper floor of new build properties (or safe access from external scaffold).
- Check! Once you're standing on the upper floor, carry out a visual inspection that the flooring panels look sound.
- Ensure material is landed onto the external scaffold's loading bay and passed through windows safely and stacked neatly in room.
- ONLY pass material through upper floors if there is safe system of work in place (e.g. hatch with double guardrails, or hatch with minimal slots (e.g. 1.2m x 250mm for materials; 600mm x 600mm for personnel), which are covered over when not in use, or fall restraint system to prevent falls through the void, in compliance with the Work at Height Regulations 2015.
- If unsure **STOP WORK** and speak to your supervisor.

**What you should do (Dismantling Decking Systems, founded on upper floors):**

- Be fit for work and always receive a pre-start briefing – if unsure **STOP**
- Receive site induction, ensure you are fully briefed on the RAMS, and work to your training and handbook/user manual.
- Confirm with client's Site Manager that the upper floor has been finished, is free from defects, and is safe to work on.
- Check! Stand on the ground floor, look up at the floor above and check for any obvious defects (like floor panels twisted)
- Always use ladder hatches to gain access onto the upper floor of new build properties (or safe access from external scaffold).
- Check! Once you're standing on the upper floor, carry out a visual inspection that the flooring panels look sound – if the timber floor is covered in debris, **STOP WORK** and speak to the client's site manager and ask him/her to get the area cleaned (including if required the top of decked system).
- Ensure all material is passed through windows safely, stacked neatly on the external scaffold's loading bay, and lowered safely to ground.
- ONLY pass material down through upper floor if there is a safe system of work in place (e.g. hatch with double guardrails, or hatch with minimal slots (e.g. 1.2m x 250mm for materials; 600mm x 600mm for personnel) covered over when not in use, or use fall restraint system to prevent falls through the void, in compliance with the Work at Height Regulations 2015.
- Always work safely and **STOP WORK** and speak to your supervisor if you are in doubt or need advice.

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