



Non-compliant safety netting

Safety net systems are used throughout the roofing industry on both steel and timber structures as a primary means of passive fall protection and also leading-edge protection to mitigate the consequences and distance should a fall occur.

Nets should be positioned as close as possible to the underside of a working level to minimise the height of a fall but should never be more than two metres away. Unfortunately, NFRC has been advised by members of the practice where principal contractors have installed horizontal drainage runs prior to the roof safety netting, forcing safety net riggers to work contrary to the requirements of FASET installation guidance. This situation prevents the netting rigger installing the nets within safe tolerances and introduces an impact hazard within the safety zone between the underside of the working level and the safety net.



Figure 1: pipework installed before the safety netting, which is unsafe.

The principal contractor controlling the work, must take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. Where the measures taken do not eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, then they must minimise distance and consequences of a fall. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 states in **Schedule 4: Requirements for Collective Safeguards for Arresting Falls (4.c)**¹ “in the case of a safeguard which distorts in arresting a fall, afford sufficient clearance distance”—this would not be the case if obstructive services, such as pipework, are installed above the safety nets and would therefore render the safety netting non-compliant

with **BS 8411:2019 Safety nets on construction sites and other works—Code of practice**; where the safety net must be installed as close as possible to the working surface and never greater than two metres as can be seen in figure 1.

The correct phasing of the works should be:

1. Install roof safety netting.
2. Install and fix walkable roof sheeting.
3. Strip and remove roof safety netting.
4. Install services.

To ensure compliance with the work at height regulations, the code of practice for installing safety nets on construction sites and to ensure that a hazard is not created within the safe zone between the underside of the working level and the safety net, this is the only correct sequence to follow.

Following this sequence will also ensure easier rescue from the nets should the need be necessary.

ACTION:

If any roofing operatives are concerned about the positioning of the safety netting, they should:

- Stop work!
- Raise their concerns at the first opportunity with their line manager.

And:

- Alert the principal contractor, including sharing this safety alert.

Contractors and principal contractors should refer to **FASET Bulletin SN23 (Revision 4) Clearance Distances Beneath Safety Nets**² for more information on safe clearance distances.

For further clarification or concerns regarding the issues raised within this safety alert please contact the NFRC helpdesk or FASET³.

FASET
Fall Arrest Safety Equipment Training



Further information

¹ Work at Height Regulations 2005 Schedule 4: Requirements for Collective Safeguards for Arresting Falls (4.c):

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/schedule/4/made>

² FASET Bulletin SN23 (Revision 4) Clearance Distances Beneath Safety Nets

<https://www.faset.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/FASET-SN-23-Clearance-Distances-Beneath-Safety-Nets-Rev-4-230911.pdf>

³ FASET:

<https://www.faset.org.uk/contact-us/>

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