SEGMENT SIXTEEN - Other Risks and Hazards

After studying this segment you should have a greater understanding of other risks and hazards that are less common in the Seafood Industry such as working from heights and transport and vehicle hazards.

AIMS OF THE SEGMENT

The first aim of this segment is to help you to appreciate the risks associated with Working at Heights and be able to:

- Give examples of common tasks that give rise to working at height.
- Describe the factors that contribute to persons and objects falling from height.
- Describe the methods and controls to reduce the risk of falls from height.
- Describe access equipment and safe methods of access, e.g. mobile towers, mobile elevated work platforms, ladders, fixed scaffold.

The second aim of this segment is to help you to appreciate the risks associated with Workplace Traffic and be able to:

- Give examples of common accidents associated with workplace vehicles and transport.
- Describe the factors that contribute to transport and vehicle injuries.
- Describe the methods and controls to reduce the risk of accidents involving transport/vehicles
- Understand preventative measures for pedestrian-vehicle conflict.

In the UK during 2005/06 there were 46 fatal accidents at work which were caused by falls from height and a further 3350 serious injuries[6], making this type of accident the biggest single cause of workplace deaths. In 2016/17 this had reduced to 25 deaths with *struck by a moving vehicle* the leader at 31 fatalities.

FALLS FROM A HEIGHT

So what do we mean by height? Well as far as the Regulations are concerned, a place is 'at height' if its high enough for someone to be injured falling from it.

Common examples of working from heights include:

- Almost every form of building and construction work;
- Window cleaning;
- Bridge painting;
- Roof repairs.

[6] HSE Leaflet INDG401 The Work at Height Regulations 2005

These are all obviously working at height, but what about some of these?

- Replacing a light fitting in a typical fish processing factory ceiling;
- Excavations deeper than 2m;
- Working close to the edge of a dock;
- Working on a fishing boat while in dry dock;

These would all be classed as working at height as it doesn't really matter whether you fall 20 feet from a roof or 20 feet down a hole, you will still injure yourself.

The problems with working at height are not just the risks of someone falling and injuring themselves, there is also the very real risk of objects being dropped and injuring someone below.

There are a number of factors that can contribute to persons and objects falling from heights. Perhaps the best way to explain what these factors are is to look first at what we need to put in place to control these risks.

CONTROL MEASURES

Common control measures used when working at height include;

1. Roof work
    - Safe access to the roof (ladder);
    - Edge protection in the form of guard rails;
    - Strong stable platform or roof to work on;
    - Suitable footwear;
    - Crawl boards used for fragile roof areas;
    - Fragile roofs – require special treatment;
    - Use of harnesses or individual airbags as appropriate;
    - Working while exposed to poor weather conditions.

2. Falling Objects

    - Netting and other barriers to protect against falling objects;
    - Exclusion zones underneath work areas;
    - Compulsory hard hat policy wherever falling objects are a risk;

3. Access

    - Safe secure access;
        i. Fixed ladders for frequent access;
        ii. Movable ladders or mobile platforms for short duration work.
    - Lifting equipment fit for purpose;
        i. Safe working loads not exceeded;
        ii. Right equipment for the job;
        iii. Employees trained to use equipment;
        iv. Waste chutes or hoists used to remove rubbish;
    - Scaffolds
        i. Fixed scaffolds for regular access;
        ii. Mobile (tower) scaffolds for short term access;

4. Public Protection

    - Warning signs;
    - Exclusion barriers;
    - Fall protection

These are the main control measures to use when working at a height, even when the height in question is a deep hole.

The main cause of persons and objects falling is not applying the above control measures effectively, plus individuals disobeying the rules or acting in an unsafe manner.

Access Equipment

In order of complexity these are:

- Step ladders – useful for that occasional bulb change etc. Usually stable and often suitable for lone use;
- Ladders – if you need to go a little higher. Ladders need to be properly secured and on a level, clean and even surface. Some organisations have a safe ladder policy and safe working practice. It's a good idea to lock up your ladders so they cannot be used casually;

Points of contact: when using a ladder how many points of contact must be maintained at all times – three. Either two feet and a hand or two hands and a foot. It cannot be four because you need to move a foot or hand to climb, and if it were two then occasionally you would have no hands or feet in contact with the ladder!

STRUCK BY A MOVING VEHICLE

Accidents involving workplace transport are far to frequent and involve a significant number of deaths each year.

Workplace transport includes all kinds of motorised vehicles at work provided they are not on the public highway, unless they are being unloaded on the highway.

This will include forklift trucks, larger vehicles, delivery vehicles and private cars (employee and visitor) on company land.

There isn't any specific legislation that deals with workplace transport but employers have a duty of care under Regulation 17 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations regarding the safety of traffic routes and pedestrian and vehicle safety in the workplace.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON ACCIDENTS

Examples are all to easy to list.

- Individuals being run over by vehicles reversing;
- Individuals stepping into the path of oncoming vehicles;
- Vehicles colliding with other vehicles, with equipment or buildings;
- Loads falling from vehicles;
- Vehicles tipping over;
- Individuals falling from vehicles;
- Individuals being crushed and trapped by vehicles;
- Etc.

When carrying out a transport risk assessment, employers need to look at the:

1. condition of the vehicle and the road;
2. condition and layout of access routes;
3. actions of drivers, pedestrians and others.

These are the main factors that contribute to the risk of an accident or incident and which need to be controlled.

The kinds of operations that present a risk are:

- Arrival and departure;
- Travel within the workplace;
- Load and unloading;
- Coupling and uncoupling vehicles;
- Maintenance.

CONTROL MEASURES

Access Routes

Access routes for vehicles onto the site and within the workplace must be fit for purpose. This includes employee parking in a food factory as well as where that fork lift truck is allowed to go. If you have a small business and unload/load a vehicle on the public highway then that counts as an access route.

Access routes must be:

- Well laid out – one way preferred;
- Well maintained and lit;
- Well sign posted;
- Adequate for the volume and type of traffic

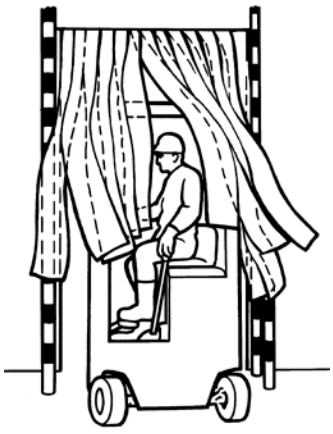
Keep separate vehicle and pedestrian routes to avoid conflict (another word for accident)**.**

Vehicle to Vehicle Accidents

These are most likely to occur when routes are two-way and vehicles pass each other, or:

- When stationary vehicles impede traffic flow;
- Vehicles go the wrong way – poor signage or poor layout;
- Drivers take short cuts;
- Mixing work and public transport – try and have separate routes for visitors/employees and delivery vehicles.

Preventative measures will include well laid out routes, one way systems, adequate space to pull in and unload, well trained drivers, discipline that is enforced, etc.



Pedestrian to Vehicle Accident

These are most likely to occur when pedestrians follow their own routes, and that is often because:

- There are no dedicated pedestrian routes;
- Short cuts are too tempting;
- Routes are poorly signed;
- Barriers are ineffective – use guard rails rather than yellow lines on the floor.
- Discipline is poor – both driver and pedestrian can be at fault;

Other contributing factors are insufficient space between pedestrian and vehicle routes, and poorly designed crossing places for pedestrians to cross vehicle routes.

Preventative measures will include well laid out routes, clear space between people and vehicles, use of physical barriers, well trained drivers, discipline, etc.

The simple fact is that if vehicles and pedestrians are kept apart there will rarely be a problem.

SUMMARY

- Falls from heights are often fatal or at least very serious.
- Control measures revolve around using the correct equipment, the appropriate working practices and people who are trained and competent.

PEME : People – Equipment – Material - Environment

- Falls from height pose a significant risk to the public.
- Vehicle/Pedestrian collisions are often fatal and are now (2016/17) the main cause of workplace fatality;
- Control measures revolve around
    - Isolation – keeping people and vehicles away from each other;
    - Keeping road/foot routes well maintained and well lit.

For more information consult the HSE documents

1. Guide to Work at Height regulations HSE Publication INDG401
2. An Overview of Workplace Transport Safety HSE Publication INDG199

