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BS 8437:2022



BSI Standards Publication

**Code of practice for selection, use and
maintenance of personal fall protection
systems and equipment for use in
the workplace**

bsi.

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Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 August 2022. It was prepared by Technical Committee PH/5, *Personal fall protection*. A list of organizations represented on this committee can be obtained on request to the committee manager.

Supersession

This British Standard supersedes BS 8437:2005+A1:2012, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

This standard has been produced in response to the need to bring together best practice regarding personal fall protection from a large number of sources including information from manufacturers, from research studies and from training organizations.

The standard applies to the use of personal fall protection systems and equipment in the workplace only, where the prime activity is the work being undertaken. It is not intended to cover, for example, leisure activities or emergency evacuation systems and their procedures. Nevertheless, those engaged in other activities would probably benefit from the advice given in this standard, as many of the principles do apply and offer good practice. This standard is not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in arboriculture.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) participated in the development of the original Standard and were consulted as part of this update.

This new edition of BS 8437 incorporates technical changes only. It does not represent a full review or revision of the standard, which will be undertaken in due course.

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Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately competent and experienced people for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is "should".

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

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Dictionary is used (e.g. "organization" rather than "organisation").

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The recipient is advised to consider seeking professional guidance with respect to its use of this publication.

This publication is not intended to constitute a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

In particular, attention is drawn to the statutory regulations listed in [Clause 4](#).

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Introduction

Falls from a height are one of the largest causes of death and injury in the workplace. It is therefore essential that measures are taken to protect workers against falls from a height. These can include measures taken at the design stage, for example in the design of a new building, collective fall protection measures such as barriers and guard rails, and the use of personal fall protection systems and equipment. It is equally essential that the fall protection measures adopted are appropriate to the particular situation, that any fall protection system or equipment is correctly maintained and that users have appropriate training.

If a person working at a height, for example on a roof-top or tower, suffers a fall such that they lose contact with the surface on which they are supported, for example by stumbling over an edge, they will almost certainly hit the ground, or any intervening obstruction, with sufficient force to cause severe or fatal injuries. The severity of the injuries will be determined by the person's impact velocity, which will depend on the height of the fall, the nature of the impact surface and the part of the body that strikes the surface. The injuries are actually caused by the forces resulting from the rapid rate of deceleration of the body at impact.

NOTE A fall of 3.05 m (10 ft) takes only 0.8 s, giving no time for the person falling to react, and results in an impact velocity of 7.74 m/s (17.3 mph).

The severity of injury does not only depend on the height of the fall. While serious or fatal injuries can result from impact from a high fall onto a solid surface, they can also result from the following:

- impact from a relatively short fall onto, or through, a fragile surface;
- a head-first impact from a relatively short fall;
- a relatively short fall into water or a hazardous substance.

The present standard deals with personal fall protection systems in the context of a hierarchy of fall protection measures. It provides details of the types of fall protection systems and equipment available and gives guidance on their selection, use and maintenance, and on the training of users.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations and guidance on the selection, use and maintenance of personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in the workplace to prevent and/or to arrest falls from a height, including systems and equipment suitable for use in rescue. It also gives guidance on rescue of persons working at a height, in the event of an accident.

It is intended for use by employers, employees and self-employed persons who use personal fall protection systems and equipment. It is also intended for use by designers, e.g. architects and structural engineers, including those who are responsible for the design of safe access routes on buildings and structures, by those who commission work at a height, e.g. building owners and contractors, and by those involved in training persons for work at a height.

The standard is not applicable to collective fall protection systems, for example work platforms and fall arrest nets. It is not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in leisure activities or in professional or private sports activities. It is also not intended to apply to personal fall protection systems and equipment for use in arboriculture.

NOTE 1 A discussion of the basic principles of fall protection is given in [Annex A](#).

NOTE 2 Recommendations and guidance on the use of rope access methods are given in [BS 7985](#).