

# FORS Toolbox Talk – V8 Working at height and the prevention of falls from vehicles



V8

## Documents and information you can refer to in the toolbox talk – look at these before you begin!

- Working at height a brief guide: [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf)
- Working at height downloads: [www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/findoutmore.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/findoutmore.htm)
- Working at height regulations 2005: [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made)
- Preventing falls from vehicles: [www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/vehicles/preventingfalls.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/vehicles/preventingfalls.htm)
- Falls from vehicles campaign: [www.hse.gov.uk/fallsfromvehicles/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/fallsfromvehicles/)
- Vehicles at work: [www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/workplacetransport/index.htm)
- Logistics safety: [www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/logistics/index.htm)

## 1. Aim of toolbox talk

The aim of this toolbox talk is to communicate this company's policy to all drivers (including sub-contracted and agency drivers) on working at height and the prevention of falls from vehicles.

This policy specifically includes drivers and those who assist them in loading activities, and passengers in passenger carrying vehicles. As a driver you must make sure that all work carried out at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent to do the job.

## 2. How this toolbox talk will help you

This toolbox talk covers:

- Getting on and off the vehicle safely
- Keeping your vehicle safe
- How you can work safely
- What you should consider with regards to the risk assessment

The talk will end with some questions, so listen up!

## 3. Reason why

Our company goal is to ensure the safety of persons around vehicles, which can often involve working at height. More than 2000 serious injuries to people falling from vehicles are reported each year and on average, five of these are fatal. Many of these injuries are broken arms or legs, resulting in weeks off work and possible loss of earnings.

Common accidents include falls from trailers, tail-lifts and truck cabs. The majority of falls from tipper lorries occur during sheeting and unsheeting

By law as a driver, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are taking practical measures to reduce the risk of yourself and others around you from falling while working at height and/or prevent falls from vehicles

Causes of falls include:

- Slipping and falling from loads and access steps and ladders
- Broken ropes or torn sheets causing overbalancing
- Inappropriate footwear
- Bad weather
- Lack of awareness and training

## 4. Getting on and off the vehicle

- DON'T jump down – this is bad for your knees and you are more likely to fall
- Always use steps and handholds if provided
- Take a few seconds to climb down from the cab, load area or catwalk facing the vehicle and use the handhold
- Report missing or damaged equipment
- Before stepping off the vehicle, check for uneven surfaces such as potholes or kerbs which may cause you to slip
- Use the 3-points of contact rule

## 5. Keeping your vehicle safe

- Carry out pre-use checks on your vehicle. For example, check any steps or handholds are in good condition
- Report broken boards and any other objects that could cause a fall
- Keep the load area tidy – pick up loose ropes, packaging etc
- Check that the straps are safely stored on curtainsiders so people don't trip on them
- Clean up spills and dirt such as diesel or mud on the catwalk or load area to stop people slipping in them
- On refrigerated vehicles, check the floor conditions for ice or water and follow any systems in place for reducing the amount of water produced

## 6. How you can work safely

- Avoid working at height unless it is essential
- Keep the soles of your footwear clean to reduce the risk of slipping
- Follow safe systems of work for loading and unloading vehicles
- Make sure you have been trained in and follow the company's safe ways of working if you have to use equipment such as tail-lifts or lorry loader cranes
- Use the 'three-point hold rule – keep at least three points of contact with the vehicle you are climbing, moving one limb at a time and testing the new hold before moving on
- Use safe ways of getting on or off the vehicle when carrying out maintenance above ground level, for example by using gantries or tower scaffolds
- Look at what other companies do – if you see a good idea suggest it to your safety adviser or supervisor

# FORS Toolbox Talk – V8 Working at height and the prevention of falls from vehicles

## 7. Your risk assessment involvement

A risk assessment is a systematic process of evaluating the potential risks that may be involved in a projected activity or undertaking.

Although an individual driver is not responsible for writing his or her own risk assessment (this is the responsibility of the fleet manager or equivalent) you should be familiar with and signed this company's risk assessment covering working at height and the prevention of falls from vehicles. You should also be aware of potential risks posed on journeys and know how to mitigate against such circumstances.

This risk assessment should cover:

- The work activity
- Equipment to be used
- Location of the work and any hazards
- Working environment (weather, lighting)
- Condition of existing work surfaces
- Duration of the work
- Your physical capabilities

The risk assessment should also include the answers to these questions:

- What tasks might involve a person climbing on to a vehicle or a structure? (Include all activities, whether frequent, irregular, or less frequent)
- What are the risks of doing these tasks?
- Can you eliminate these risks?
- If not, how can you reduce these risks?

Make sure you are familiar with the risk assessment for working at height and that you have signed it.

## 8. Incentive

Planning loading and unloading activities and working safely at height can help:

- Reduce the likelihood of accidents and their associated cost, time and reputation loss
- Improve our safety record
- Promote a positive health and safety culture
- You to better understand what risks are involved

## 9. Questions to ask to ensure that the talk has been understood

1. What are the common causes of falls?
2. What is a risk assessment and what should it cover with regards to working at height and preventing falls from vehicles?
3. What must you do when getting on or off a vehicle?
4. What things can you do to help keep your vehicle safe?
5. Provide examples of how you can work more safely?

## 10. Final summary

To sum up, we need to ensure the safety of persons around vehicles which can often involve working at height. Avoid working at height unless it is essential and if this is unavoidable make sure that all work carried out at height is properly planned, supervised and carried out by people who are competent to do the job.

Remember, getting on and off the vehicle safely, keeping your vehicle safe and working safely at all times will help to prevent yourself and your colleagues from getting injured whilst working at height and promote a positive health and safety culture.

By law, as a driver, it is your responsibility to make sure that you are taking practical measures to reduce the risk of yourself and others around you from falling while working at height and/or prevent falls from vehicles.

Risk assessments are required by law and are an essential part of identifying sensible measures to control the risks in your workplace. They help you decide whether you have covered all you need to. It is essential that you are familiar with the risk assessment for working at height and have signed it.

The consequences of not taking these practical measures could mean you need time off work due to a fall, however, things could be a lot more serious, so why take the risk?

Thank you for your time – and now I would like your feedback.