

# Guidance

## Dropped objects mitigation controls

Mitigating controls - reduce the consequences of an incident if preventive controls fail or are not effective.

- Secondary retention such as tool tethers and lanyards
- How do they mitigate? - Secondary retention helps stop the items falling completely to the ground.
- Use of company approved tools and tethering systems for working at heights
- How do they mitigate? - Working at Height Tool Kits stops the tools from falling to the ground.
- As an example securing the tool using a lanyard to a suitable anchor point so the tool is restrained should the worker let go.
- Note! The lanyard / tether should be structurally rated and anchor point should also be structurally rated where tools are anchored to a belt, tool bag or tool holster.
- Effective use of barriers (consideration of potential for bounce/deflection of a dropped object) how do they mitigate? - Barriers keep personnel away from an area where there may be the potential for dropped objects.
- Designated restricted access areas (Red/Yellow/Green)
- how do they mitigate? - Restricted access areas keep non-essential personnel away from specific areas where there may be the potential for dropped objects.

## Tool and Object Fall Zones

For example the floor areas should be designated as one of three zones:

Green, Yellow, or Red:

Green Zone – Anyone may enter as long as no additional barriers are in place.

Yellow Zone – Authorized personnel with tasks in the area may enter.

All other personnel require permission to enter or work in this area.

Red Zone – Only authorised personnel who are required for the current task / operation.

All other personnel are strictly not permitted in this area at any time.

Designated zones should have signs at all access points and access diagrams

## Safety tools that should be used prevent and mitigate dropped tools and objects

**THINK** - Use this to plan the job, to carry out risk assessment, method statements and apply controls

**START** - Use this tool to monitor the job

**TIME OUT FOR SAFETY (TOFS)** - Stop the job and re-assess when changes occur

**INSPECTIONS** - Carry out periodic inspections as advised in the method statement

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## Dropped Tool Awareness

It is commonly recognised that hand tools can be grouped into three causes of tools being dropped:

During usage when vigorous movement and other factors can lead to the user losing grip on the item.

Transportation, when the tools are moved or carried to the desired work location, where unintentional collisions with other objects or structures or lapses in concentration.

After usage where tools can be unintentionally left behind, and where they may drop from the surface due to nearby vibrations or be knocked over the edge.

Dropped tools, debris or materials may hit individuals below, leading to serious injury or death. Risk assessment will ideally identify work areas where objects may possibly drop from, and also the method statement should list the appropriate control measures that must be taken.

## Why provide for tool tethering?

Hand tools used during work at height may potentially be dropped very easily. As a preventive measure, tools should be secured using a lanyard to the user.

When correctly used, this will prevent the items from dropping during use or transportation. Furthermore, the lanyard also cuts down the possibility of tools being lost, misplaced or left behind on completion.

It is strongly recommended that specialist rated tool tether's which include a lanyard is used, making certain the actual performance of the tool use is maintained without difficulty to the operative.

Safeguarding yourself, co-workers and members of the public from the risk of being struck by falling objects can be achieved with appropriate risk assessment and the implementation of suitable control measures.

An effective system will benefit the company and its workforce by:

- Lowering the probability of accidents.
- Improve working efficiency and safety for workers.
- Enhance company's reputation as a responsible contractor that recognises the need for proper planning, operations and use of appropriate equipment.
- Answer to these pressing needs - One of the greatest challenges of using tools at height relates to conduct, work procedures and inadequate securing of tools and equipment.

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