

Health and Safety Executive		Sector Information Minute	
Agriculture and Food Sector		SIM 01/2005/06	
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Target Audience:
FOD Inspectors inspecting agriculture

USE OF NON-POWERED ACCESS PLATFORMS IN HORTICULTURE AND AGRICULTURE

This SIM draws Inspectors attention to the safeguards required for the use of access platforms in horticulture and agriculture

BACKGROUND

1 Inspectors have identified concerns about the application of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 (WAHR) in relation to mobile access equipment used for hedge trimming, fruit picking etc. This note provides advice to inspectors on the issues to be considered and the standards to be achieved for access platforms used in horticulture and agriculture.

2 This SIM does not apply to powered access platforms or barrows.

3 The relevant standards that may apply are BSEN 1004:2004 Mobile access and working towers made of prefabricated elements. Material, dimensions, design loads, requirements, and BSEN 13374:2004 Temporary edge protection systems. Product specification, test methods and BSEN 12811:2005 Temporary works equipment. Scaffolds. Performance requirements and general design.

DETAILS

4 The height of the working platform at which guardrails are provided vary from manufacturer to manufacturer however where guard rails are provided they should comply with the standards as detailed in the WAH regulations i.e.

- a. Top rails should be at least 950mm above the working platform
- b. Mid-rails should be provided and these should be positioned so that there is no unprotected gap greater than 470mm between the toe boards or guardrails
- c. Toe boards should be at least 150mm high.

5 Access ladders to any work platform should be robust & secure in use, to conform to the requirements of the WAHR and associated guidance on safe use of ladders (INDG402).

6 Where the access platforms are fitted with wheels some are being used as small trailers to be towed or manually pushed. Users should obtain information from the suppliers about the strength and capability for any such use. Users should also contact the vehicle suppliers about maximum loading for the towing of such unbraked trailers.

7 Users of access equipment should be adequately trained about the safe use of such equipment, in particular about the need to ensure that the method of use does not result in the platform becoming unstable.

8 A suitable instruction manual should be available. The manual should include instructions for safe erection methods, maintenance and safety checks etc.

ACTION BY INSPECTORS

9 When advising users/manufacturers of this type of equipment inspectors may wish to refer to the above list of issues.

10 Enforcement in line with EMM for WAHR. Please consult the Agriculture & Food Sector before any action is taken under Section 6 HSWA.

11 This information is also relevant to Local Authority Officers as this type of equipment may be used at premises where they are the relevant health and safety enforcing authority.

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