

# WAHSA EDITORIAL

## DEFINITIONS AND PRINCIPALS

### 01 DEFINITIONS

#### **“work at height”**

- (a) work in any place, including a place at or below ground level
- (b) obtaining access to or egress from such place while at work, except by a staircase in a permanent workplace, where, if measures required by The Work at Regulations were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

#### **“Personal fall protection system” (PFPS)**

Assembly of components or equipment to protect the individual whilst working at height (including gaining access / egress from the working position)

#### **“Personal fall prevention system”**

A PFPS not using a body holding device connected to an anchor, by which a person is prevented from reaching zones where the risk of a fall exists

#### **“Work restraint system”**

A PFPS which uses a body holding device connected to a reliable anchor to prevent a person from reaching zones where the risk of a fall exists

#### **“Work positioning system”**

A PFPS which normally includes a body holding device connected to a reliable anchor to supports the user in tension or suspension in such a way that a fall is prevented or restricted

#### **“Rope access system”** (explicitly, “Rope access and positioning techniques”)

A PFPS, using two lines (or ropes), each positionally static and separately secured to reliable anchors , one equipped with a body holding device acting as the primary means of support and the other equipped to act as a safety back up to arrest and restrict the fall in the event the primary support fails.

#### **“Fall arrest system”**

A PFPS which uses a body holding device connected to a reliable anchor to arrest and restrict a fall so as to prevent the collision of the user with the ground or structure whilst limiting the forces on the body.

#### **“Rescue system”**

A PFPS by which a person can carry out a rescue, rescue himself / herself or be rescued from a height or a depth by pulling, lifting, lowering or self-ascent / descent

#### **“Advance guardrail system”**

An assembly of components or equipment designed to provide collective fall prevention measures which does not expose any person to the risk of a fall during its installation

## 02 PRINCIPALS

### Examples of fundamental principles to be applied to PFPS:

**Principle:** Work restraint – if you are able to fall it is fundamentally not work restraint no matter what it is called

**Note:** The term “fall restraint” is incorrect and should not be used - the correct term is “work restraint”.

**Principle:** “Work restraint” becomes “work positioning” at the point when the connection between the body holding device and the reliable anchor begins to provide support to the user, which the user needs to rely on to maintain his position.

**Note:** On a sloping surface this is likely to occur when the angle of the slope exceeds approximately 17° - 22° (to the horizontal) depending on the condition of the surface the user is standing on (17° wet and slippery; 22° dry non-slippery).

The anchor of a work restraint system should have a capacity of three times the users body weight. A work positioning system must include a fall arrest system.

### When the equipment involves the use of ropes or lines:

**Principle:** Just because ropes or lines may be used does not automatically mean that rope access and positioning techniques should be applied.

**Principle:** If the rope moves with the user then functionality will either be work positioning or fall arrest.

**Note:** It is intended that in this type of application the equipment will always be subject to LOLER as the person (load) is being raised and lowered by the equipment and in particular the rope.

**Principle:** If the rope remains stationary and user moves along it using his own effort functionality will either be work positioning (e.g. on a sloping surface say using a rope grab on a standing line) or rope access and positioning (moving up and down using two predominantly vertical stationary lines).

**Note:** It is intended that in this type of application the equipment might ultimately not be subject to LOLER as the person (load) moves him/herself along the equipment and in particular the ropes.

## 03 REFERENCES

Advisory Committee on Work At Height Training (ACWAHT). 2006. *Work at Height Awareness Syllabus*. Online. ACWAHT