

Drop Zones Guide

Definition

A Drop Zone is described as a defined area below work that is being performed above ground, where there is the potential for suspended loads, tools, equipment, waste or other items to fall and create a risk to workers or members of the public below.

Gravity

Any object dropped from a height creates a significant amount of force. The higher the aerial work being performed, the more force the dropped object will generate.

For example, a one kilogram object dropped from nine metres creates about 2700 kilograms of force.

Zone Management

Before any overhead activities are conducted an exclusion zone needs to be setup.

- Access should be restricted to those personnel who are actively involved with the work at height activities. Where possible keep the zone clear of workers while work is occurring overhead.
- Persons entering the zone should be authorised to do so by the person in charge.
- Delivery and vehicle-parking areas etc, should NOT be situated within the zone.
- Hardhats should be worn at all times.
- Access to areas within buildings that extend into the zone should be prevented unless it can be demonstrated that the building fabric is substantial enough to withstand the impact of likely falling objects.
- Members of the public should not be permitted to enter the zone.
- Where there are roads and footpaths within the zone, the appropriate authority should be contacted in order to obtain closures or diversions.
- Never 'bomb' objects to the ground from any height.
- Use buckets or other secure methods when moving objects up and down within the drop zone.
- Install a secure barrier, screening nets or catch platforms.
- Leash tools to a wrist lanyard or other secure locations

Controls

Controlling the perimeter of the drop-zone is vital. To do so can involve one or more of the following:

- Block off all gates or entrances that lead into the drop-zone.
- Lock or place signs on the inside of all doors that are used to exit buildings that are located within the drop zone.
- Ensure workers, visitors and third parties who enter the site are made aware of the drop zone.
- Wherever possible use temporary fencing, cones, bunting or barrier to keep the drop zone free of people.
- Any barriers used should be supplemented with the necessary signage.

Zone Radius

As a rule of thumb, the drop zone radius should be approximately one third (33)% of the working height. However, as a general rule, a minimum drop zone radius of 4m should be established (where practicable).



[Falling Objects](#)