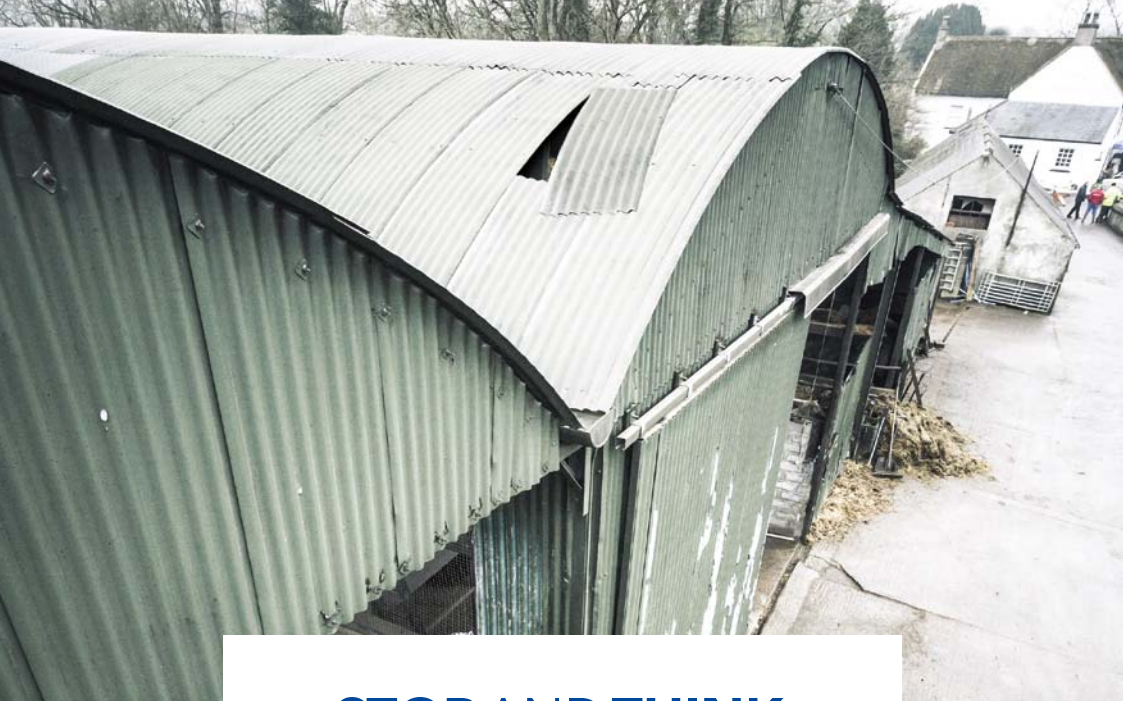


FALLS

PREVENTING FALLS

FROM HEIGHTS



STOP AND THINK

SAFE

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT



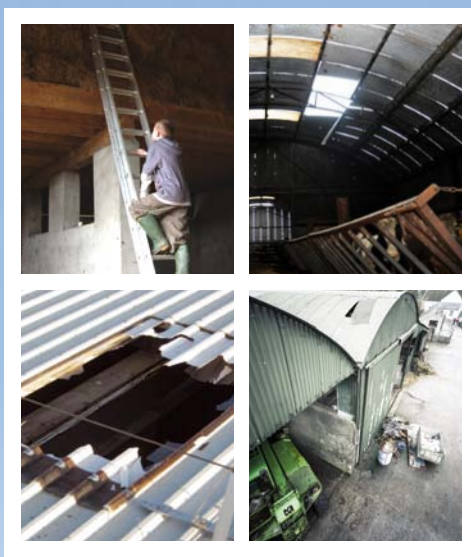
FALLS

Safe Working at Heights on Farms to Prevent Falls

Farm workers of any age run the risk of injury or death from falls. Working at height is an ever-present danger on farms.

Falls from height is a leading cause of serious injury and death among Northern Ireland's farming community, accounting for more than a quarter of all accidents.

Many falls happen while agricultural buildings or other farm structures are being built or maintained. These jobs typically involve working at height and require some form of temporary access, such as ladders, scaffolds, or other working platforms.



STOP AND THINK

SAFE

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT



Before working at Height take a moment to Stop and Think!

**THERE IS ALWAYS THE SERIOUS RISK THAT
YOU COULD FALL OFF OR THROUGH THE
ROOF OF A FARM BUILDING.**



THINK

about the job you are going to do in advance and plan to work safely. Simple safety measures can dramatically reduce the danger to yourself, your family and other farm workers.

THINK

about whether or not there are different, new or safer ways to carry out the work. For example, if a roof requires repair, can you avoid going onto it by carrying out the repair safely from below?

THINK

about choosing collective measures that will keep everyone working at or near the site safe, like a working platform, before personal measures such as a safety harness.

THINK

about what equipment is required for the job and for safety. Precautions should be built in to prevent you or others from falling. For example, using guard rails at a roof edge, or crawling boards on a fragile roof.

THINK

about the importance of maintaining your equipment. Make sure there are no defects in any equipment you use and inspect it regularly.

REMEMBER

Falls often occur because no precautions are taken, or the equipment employed is defective, not appropriate, or used incorrectly. Often people about to do a job believe it will 'only take a few minutes'. They take the risk in the hope that simply being careful will be enough.

STOP AND THINK

SAFE

SLURRY ANIMALS FALLS EQUIPMENT

Ladders

Many farm injuries each year result from ladders slipping sideways or out from the base, or someone falling from the ladder. It will often be quicker and safer to use a platform on your telescopic handler or a tower scaffold. Ladders should only be used as the last resort when there is no safer way of doing the job.

Working platforms on telescopic handlers

For planned or regular work at height, you should use a fully integrated and properly constructed working platform. This will have controls that are linked to and isolate the handler controls so that only the person on the platform can control the platform and handler movements.

Falls from open edges

If you are working on a roof you will normally need protection against falling from the roof edge. Keep in mind that many other maintenance tasks in agriculture can also involve the risk of falling, for example cleaning crop stores.



Falls through roof-lights

Fragile roof-light sheets are often found in roofs which are otherwise non-fragile. If you do not identify these sheets and fail to take appropriate precautions, the consequences can be tragic.



Falls through fragile roofs

In agriculture, roughly half of the deaths and serious injuries resulting from falls involve work on fragile roofs. These are roofs sheeted with materials that will not safely support a person's weight and can shatter without warning.

Common examples: fibre cement roof sheets (commonly referred to as 'asbestos cement'), corroded metal sheets, and many roof-light sheets.



Case studies

Fall through a fragile roof

A 54 year old farmer died in hospital after he fell 6m (20ft) through the roof of a shed while clearing out guttering which had become blocked with leaves and debris. The farmer had correctly secured the ladder, but stepped on a roof light as he was working. The roof light gave way and the farmer fell onto cubicles below.

Fall from a ladder

A farmer died when he fell from a ladder while he was building an extension to a farm shed. The pressure of the ladder on the upright it was propped against caused the structure to collapse and when the farmer fell, one of the beams in the roof he was constructing fell and struck him on the head, causing fatal injuries. The farmer should have used scaffolding or other suitable equipment to enable him to work safely when carrying out this task.

FALLS

The 'Stop and Think' Checklist

ALWAYS

- ✓ When using a ladder, make sure it is in good condition and long enough for the job.
- ✓ Watch out for overhead power lines.
- ✓ Ensure the ladder is tied or footed to prevent slipping.
- ✓ Keep 3 points of contact with the ladder and avoid stretching where your belt buckle goes outside the stiles of the ladder.
- ✓ Check the location of roof-lights before crossing a roof. They are often hard to see once you are on the roof.
- ✓ Plan a path to avoid roof-lights. And remember a roof-light won't hold your weight. It will shatter instantly and you will fall through the opening.
- ✓ Check for corrosion of the sheets on a corrugated iron roof from below and again when you get up before crossing the roof.
- ✓ Check that moss or accumulated dirt hasn't made the sheets slippery before walking out on the surface.

NEVER

- Set up a ladder on ground with cross slopes or down slopes.
- Level the supporting surface with strong packing.
- Never try to use a single plank to span the purlins or the joist.
- Always use crawling boards or lightweight staging.

Remember

For many tasks carried out at height, using a suitable, purpose-built work platform attached to a suitable forklift or materials handler will provide greater protection against falls than using a ladder. Never use makeshift alternatives such as grain buckets, potato boxes, or pallets. Think first and it could save your life.

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