



TREEEVOLUTION

Scotland

VAT Reg. No: 735 0209 61

TREE WORK AT HEIGHT Current position for compliance with Work at Height Regulations

Two Rope Working

HSE have recently reviewed current tree climbing techniques and accident statistics involving falls from height during tree work. They have interpreted that the current techniques, when using both moving and stationery rope climbing techniques, are not wholly compliant with the Work at Height Regulations.

They have stated that the industry must make changes **immediately** to climbing techniques/systems to achieve compliance.

Work at Height Regulations:

Schedule 5, Part 2 – Additional requirement for work positioning systems

A work positioning system shall be used only if either –

- a) The system includes a suitable backup system for preventing or arresting a fall, and
- b) Where the system includes a line as a backup system, the user is connected to it, or
- c) Where it is not reasonably practicable to comply with sub-paragraph (a), all practical measures are taken to ensure that the work positioning system does not fail.

Hierarchy Approach to Planning Tree Work

- 1 Is the work necessary?
- 2 Can the work be carried out from ground?
- 3 Can mechanical systems be used (MEWPS)?
- 4 Can tree climbing techniques be used safely?
 - (i) Climbing using 2 independent systems on 2 independent load bearing anchors.
 - (ii) Climbing using 2 independent systems on a single load bearing anchor.

Only when neither of the above points are reasonably practicable to achieve or are deemed, as part of the risk assessment, to present an increased risk to the climber and all practicable measures are taken to ensure that the climbing / work positioning system does not fail.

- (iii) A single climbing system on one load bearing anchor point.



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INTERIM GUIDANCE ON COMPLIANCE WITH WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS/TREE CLIMBING

ACCESS

1 Rope Advance System

- Prepare 3 systems (2 x climbing systems + 1 lanyard)
- Install 2 systems from ground. Test each system. Ascend to first anchor.
- Install lanyard.
- Disconnect system 1 and advance to next anchor. Test.
- Disconnect system 2 and advance to same or separate adjacent anchor. Test and disconnect lanyard. Ascend.
- **Maintain 2 load bearing systems at all times.**
- Repeat to final anchor point.

2 Throw Line

- Install 2 separate climbing systems and if possible do so on independent anchors. Test systems independently. Ascend.

WORK POSITIONING

- Select 2 independent load bearing anchors, where possible and install 2 separate climbing systems. Test systems independently.

1 First Choice

- Work using 2 independent climbing systems.

2 Second Choice

Where using a second system is not reasonably practicable or increases the risk to the climber (eg; where a free hand is required for stabilisation or there is a conflict of systems/equipment).

- Progress to a point in the tree where the use of a second system is not reasonably practicable or increases the risk.
Disconnect the second system and “park” it in the tree.
Progress on a single system using supplementary non-load bearing anchors to stabilise at the final work position.
- Pick up the “parked” second system and reconnect on the way back into the stem.
- Climbing on a single system should be for short exposure periods only.



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DESCENT

- Both primary and secondary working systems should be long enough to descend to ground, or a short second system should be re-anchored to allow descent to ground.

RESCUE

- Single system may be acceptable in a rescue situation.

The Arboricultural Association are currently working to revise:

1. The Tree Work at Height – Industry Code of Practice (ICOP)
(Target release date: January 2020)
2. Technical Guide – Tree Climbing and Aerial Rescue (TG1)
(Target release date: March 2020)

It is envisaged that TG1 Guidance will be integrated into national training and assessment standards in spring 2020.

In the meantime, Treeevolution Scotland can offer Update Training for experienced climbers and managers. This would be a 1 day or 2 day course depending on your requirements.

Objectives:

- Inform climbers / managers of the current position.
- Tree Access techniques and equipment choice / configuration.
- Work Positioning techniques and equipment choice / configuration.
- Aerial Rescue.

Chris White
December 2019

Treeevolution Scotland is a LANTRA approved training provider.



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