



INFORMATION SHEET

Managing the risks of falls from roofs in the housing construction industry

This information is to assist persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs) and workers to manage the risks of falls from roofs in the housing construction industry.

It has been prepared in recognition that the risks of falls increases when the pitch of the roof is above 26° and the severity of a fall related injury increases if the fall occurs from a height of 3 metres or more.

This guidance supports, but does not replace, requirements under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020* and associated regulations.

Transitional arrangements

Until 30 September 2026

- Regulation 3.55 of the OSH Regulations 1996 (OSH Regulations) applies in high-risk construction work until 30 September 2026.

Key requirements under regulation 3.55 (OSH Regulations):

- Provide compliant edge protection when risk of falling is:
 - 2 metres or more from scaffold, fixed stair, landing, suspended slab, formwork or falsework
 - 3 metres or more from any other edge.
- If a fall injury prevention system is provided for work at heights of 3 metres or more, it must be operational and used.
- Regulations 78 and 79A of WHS Regulations apply but do not override Regulation 3.55.

From 1 October 2026

- Application of Regulation 3.55 (OSH Regulations) will cease.
- Regulation 79 of the WHS Regulations will apply to high-risk construction work.
- A 6-month Statement of Regulatory Intent will follow to assist transition to new laws.

High risk construction work – safe work method statement (SWMS)

Construction work taking place where a potential fall may be from 2 metres or more is defined as high-risk construction work in the WHS Regulations.

A safe work method statement (SWMS) must be prepared before such work begins. The SWMS must detail the fall **hazards identified**, the **controls** to be used and how they will be **monitored** and **reviewed**.

If you are relying on administrative controls (such as training safe work procedures, exclusion zones, permit systems, signs or personal protective equipment (PPE)) to manage the risk of a fall more than 2 metres but less than 3 metres, the SWMS must describe why the use of fall prevention measures were not used.

For more information please see the [Safe work method statement for high risk construction work: Information sheet](#).

Risk of falling 3 metres or more or roof slope over 26°

Before you start work you must prepare a SWMS and have a fall prevention device like edge protection in place.

If it is not reasonably practicable to use a fall prevention device, you must use a work positioning system, or if that is not reasonably practicable a fall arrest system.

Note: Where there is a risk of falling 3 metres or more, the use of administrative controls (e.g. training, safe work procedures, exclusion zones permit systems and appropriate signs) on their own is not permitted.

Risk of falling between 2 to 3 metres

Before you start work you must prepare a SWMS and identify any fall hazards and risks.

Where there are fall hazards, control measures must be implemented that are appropriate for the level of risk. It is reasonably practicable to ensure that edge protection is in place where there is a risk of falling 2 metres or more from a scaffold, fixed stair, landing, suspended slab, formwork or falsework.

For roof work with a risk of falling between 2 to 3 metres, the controls are identified through the SWMS. Where there are additional hazards in the fall zone (e.g. a retaining wall or building waste) further controls may be needed in addition to administrative controls (e.g. scaffolding or edge protection). Control measures must be monitored and reviewed.

Table 1. Falls risk assessment

	Fall risk less than 2 metres	Fall risk 2 – 3 metres		Fall risk greater than 3 metres
		Simple task: wall plates, ceiling joists, ceiling frame	Complex task: obstacles in fall zone, retaining wall, gable, portico	
Risk assessment: Review policies and procedures, adequate training, experience and supervision, ladder check, equipment and tasks involved.				
SWMS	Optional			
Fall prevention measures	Optional	Optional	 *	

* Risk assessment to determine the need for fall prevention measures

The risk assessment process is shown below.

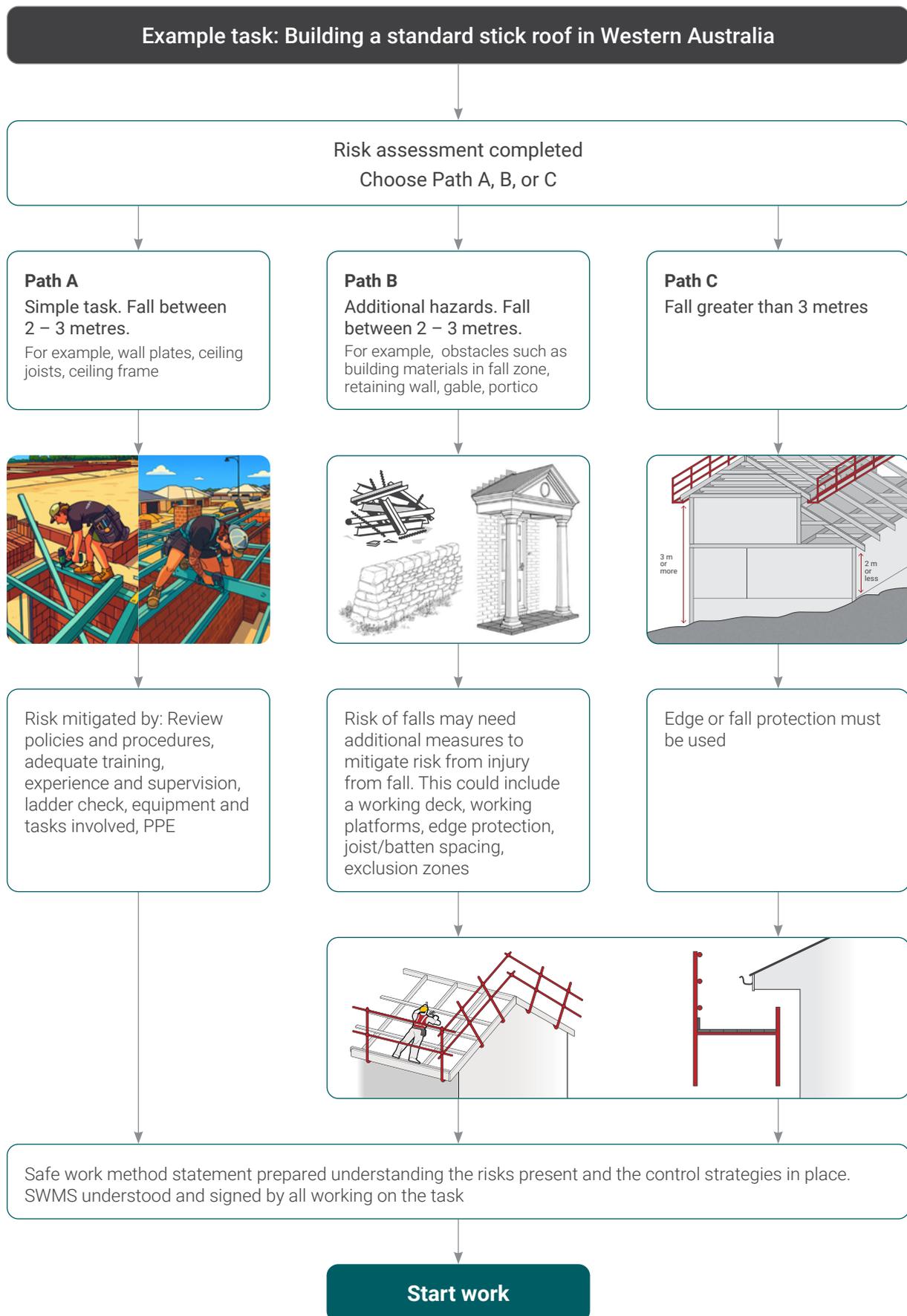


Figure 1: Example task: building a standard stick roof in Western Australia

Frequently asked questions

Which fall prevention control measure should I use?

The chosen control must manage the risk and any associated risks introduced as a result of implementing the control measure.

Factors to consider when deciding on which controls to adopt may include:

- the training and experience requirements, for example for individual fall arrest and restraint systems such as harnesses
- worker specific risks, such as young workers, new workers, workers new to the type of work, or workers with a physical constraint. Administrative controls may be less reliable with these workers and edge protection or work platforms should be considered
- the location and configuration of the work area (e.g. it may not be reasonably practicable to fit edge protection around the work area and alternative such as temporary work platforms may be needed)
- the number of workers. Where several workers are working in the same area, individual fall arrest and restraint systems may prove ineffective or interfere with each other, introducing further risk. In these situations, edge protection or temporary work platforms may be a better solution.

What are administrative controls?

Administrative controls are measures such as inductions, policies and procedures, permit systems, exclusion zones, appropriate signs, PPE and includes the preparation of a SWMS. Administrative controls are less reliable than other control measures as they rely on the actions of the individual to be effective.

The use of administrative controls on their own is not permitted where there is a risk of falling three metres or more.

What should be considered when assessing hazards and risks?

Identify any fall hazards by inspecting the workplace and consulting with workers. Examples include:

- unprotected edges
- unguarded openings
- fragile or brittle roof
- small lot hazards (e.g. falling into narrow gaps between boundary walls or falling onto perimeter fencing)
- trip hazards
- the slope of work surfaces
- slippery surfaces
- type of work (e.g. carrying an awkward load, amount of movement)
- objects on the ground a worker could fall onto
- tools, material and equipment used by workers
- capacity of the roof to support loads, including the weight of the workers.

Assess the risk of injury that may result from any fall hazards by understanding:

- How severe the harm could be by considering:
 - What types of harm could occur and how severe they could be (e.g. head injury, laceration)?
 - What factors would influence the severity of the harm (e.g. the distance a worker could fall, objects in the fall zone)?
 - How many people could be harmed?
- How the hazards may cause harm by considering:
 - How effective are the controls in minimising or excluding all types of harm?
 - How work is actually done?
 - The design and layout of elevated work areas.
 - The number and movement of people at the workplace.
 - Weather conditions (e.g. wet weather, wind, amount of light).
 - Suitability of footwear for the conditions.
 - Are there multiple different hazards that in combination increase the risk (e.g. carrying an awkward load on a sloped roof in wet weather)?
 - Are there any infrequent or unusual situations that might occur (e.g. high winds could increase the risks to balance for workers on a sloped roof)?
- The likelihood of harm occurring:
 - How often are workers near the hazard and how close do they get to it?
 - How long are workers exposed to the hazard?
 - How experienced are workers?
 - Has an injury ever happened before at the workplace or elsewhere and how often?

Control measures must be:

- appropriate for the level of risk
- fit for purpose
- suitable for the nature and duration of the work
- set up, installed, used and maintained correctly
- reviewed to make sure they are effective.

Make sure workers receive training and instruction on:

- SWMS, safe work procedures and control measures being used to prevent falls
- correct use of tools and equipment
- emergency procedures
- using control measures correctly.

More information

- [Construction work: Code of practice](#)
- [Managing the risk of falls at workplaces: Code of practice](#)
- [Managing the risk of falls in housing construction: Code of practice](#)
- [Safe work method statement for high risk construction work: Template](#)
- [Safe work method statement for high risk construction work: Information sheet](#)