



5

WORKING SAFELY  
AT HEIGHT TOOLKIT

Factsheet

## Temporary work platforms



What do I need to know about temporary work platforms?

Temporary work platforms (TWP) provide a place to work when working at height.

There are a range of temporary work platforms:

- scaffolding
- trestles, podium, folding and step-up platforms
- constructed temporary work platforms
- step platforms

TWPs with guardrails are preferred for working at height as they isolate workers from the risk of falling.

Ensure that workers are trained and have suitable experience with the types of TWP being used. TWPs are most often used for work under 5 m.



**Which TWP should I use?**

Information about each of the different types of TWP is included in this factsheet to help you select and use the right one for the job.



**What do I need to know about step platforms?**

- A step platform provides a safer alternative to a stepladder, especially where the task involves working at height for extended periods or with restricted vision (for example, welding or other hot work).
- A step platform is more stable and provides a much larger work surface than a stepladder.
- Some models are collapsible and should comply with *AS/NZS 1892.1 Portable ladders, metal*.



### What do I need to know about scaffolding?

- Scaffolding is the most common type of TWP for working at height.
- Scaffolding must have guardrails, including mid rails and toe boards, on the exposed sides and at the end of all working platforms, regardless of height.
- Scaffolding needs to be erected, altered and dismantled by workers who have been trained and have suitable experience.
- Scaffolding over 5 m high must be reported to the Department of Labour because it must be erected by a person holding a Certificate of Competency.
- The *Scaffolding, Access & Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ) Best Practice Guidelines for Scaffolding in New Zealand* provides further information.



A worker using a step platform.



### What do I need to know about trestle scaffolds?

- Trestle scaffolds are only suitable for low-level work, such as light duty activities including plastering, painting, general fit-out and finishing.
- Only use trestle scaffolds when your assessment shows alternative controls like scaffold or elevating work platforms can not be used.
- Use trestle scaffolds with a guardrail system as per the manufacturer's instructions. Only use trestle scaffolds without a guardrail system when your assessment shows a low likelihood of a person falling and injuring themselves, i.e for short duration work and low-level work.
- Trestle scaffolds that use scaffold boards or staging must be manufactured and used in accordance with *AS/NZS 1892 Portable Ladders*.
- Trestle scaffolds that are self-supporting stands, including horizontal members designed to support one end of a light-duty work platform, must be designed and constructed to comply with *AS/NZS 1576.5* or other accepted international standards.



### What do I need to know about constructed temporary work platforms?

- Only build your own temporary work platform where there is no alternative work platform available.
- Only use suitable construction material, i.e. never construct working platforms from pallets, bricks, concrete blocks, buckets or barrels, furniture, nail boxes, or packing crates.
- Ensure the platform is constructed, or its construction is supervised by, competent and skilled tradesmen.
- Ensure guardrails, toe boards, and mid rails are in place.
- Ensure the platform can safely support workers, material, and plant necessary to complete the work.
- Ensure the minimum width of a working platform is 675 mm and maintains unobstructed access of 450 mm.



### What do I need to know about podium, folding and step-up platforms?

- These platforms are intended for short-term, low-level and interior work.
- If used outside on soft ground, sole boards are required to keep the platform stable.
- Use with a guardrail system as per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Only use without a guard rail system when your assessment shows low likelihood of a person falling and injuring themselves, i.e. short duration and low-level work.

Refer to the *Scaffolding, Access & Rigging New Zealand (SARNZ) Best Practice Guidelines for Scaffolding in New Zealand* for the general principles of light duty platforms.