

# Training

## - new British Standard defines core elements

Anyone who needs to work at height must be properly and adequately trained. But how should such training be provided? What levels of competence are required? The British Standard BS8454:2006, Code of practice for delivery of training and education for work at height and rescue, aims to provide guidance on these issues

**Why was the Advisory Committee for Work at Height Training (ACWAHT) formed and what has it achieved?**

Falls from height remain the largest cause of death and injury at the workplace which is why the Work at Height Regulations 2005 were introduced. Section 5 of the regulations explicitly require that anyone working at height be trained. ACWAHT was formed by a HSE initiative with the remit to look into work at height and establish a common base standard for all work at height training in the UK.

The committee examined different forms of training in various sectors, such as the prison service and the fire brigade. It got each body to submit the basis of its course which were analysed to arrive at a common standard for training, set out in a guidance document. An offshoot of this was the formulation of BS8454 as a code of practice for the delivery of training and education for work at height and rescue.

**Why is BS8454 important for work at height? What can be learnt from the standard?**

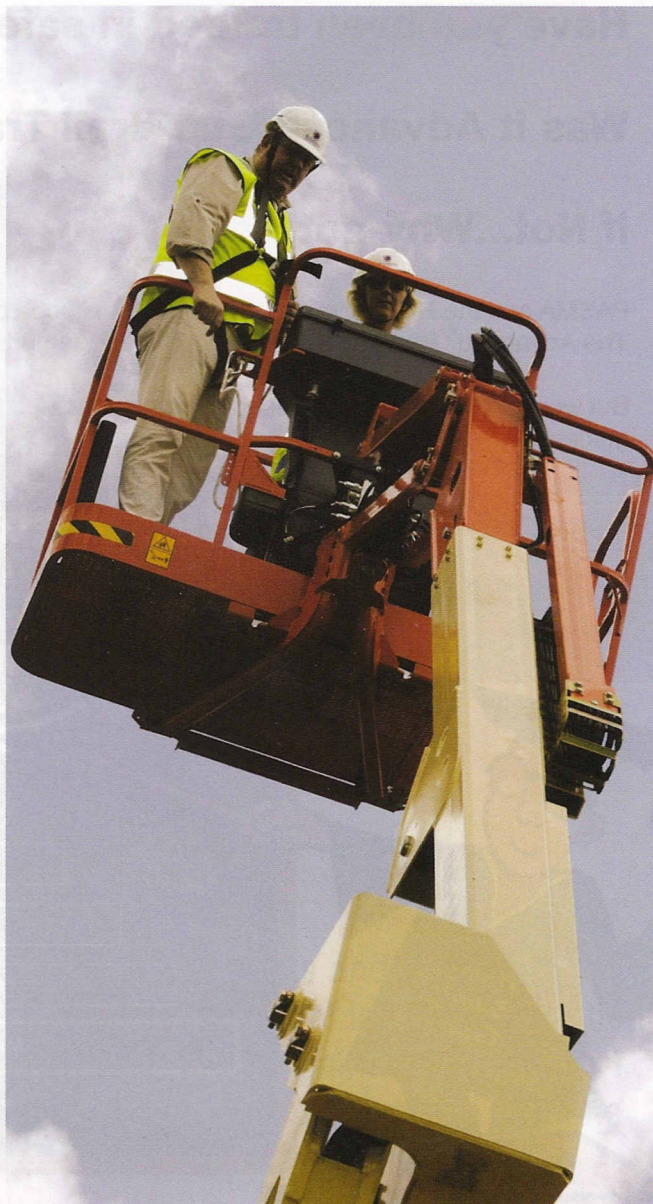
BS8454 is a good guidance document for all sectors involved in work at height. It defines the responsibilities of the different

players - trainers, competent persons, supervisors, site managers and highlights the need for proper management and auditing systems. It also helps training centres by explaining how to do it right and how to raise standards.

BS8454 covers the A to Z of training: from the pre-course aspects like prior assessment medical checks and insurance to revision numbers, equipment first aid, syllabus structure and timetable, delivery, certification, record-keeping and management reviews. It is basically a guide for training bodies on how to run a professional training organisation for work at height.

**What should employers and site managers look out for? Should they insist on training providers complying with BS8454?**

It is never wrong to adopt and follow best practice. The big question is how many bodies openly say that they comply with the standard? One of the issues that ACWAHT debated and dealt with was small companies providing training on a small scale. Some companies often have little comprehension of how to run a solid training operation. They were further behind compared to larger companies and have had to adapt more quickly. For example, BS8454



Work at height training that complies with BS8454 is delivered according to defined procedures, ensuring a common standard across all sectors

highlights the importance of record-keeping and maintaining reference documents. These are the small, petty things that protect us in the event of the unexpected, when larger issues crop up. It is all about establishing procedures, following them systematically and having check systems in place.

The standard enables training bodies to audit their procedures. For instance, the International Powered Access Federation, who provide work at height training through its members, had its procedures scrutinised by independent auditors, who established that IPAF complies with BS8454.

**What impact will BS8454 have on the industry?**

Work at height as an activity spans multiple industries - construction, manufacturing, logistics and materials handling, repairs and refurbishment. Members of ACWAHT come from diversified backgrounds and the committee sought comments from multiple industries. The huge input gathered is now crystallised in a document that sums up how training should be provided. The most important benefit is that different industries now have one basic structure by which they can measure the robustness of their training programmes for work at height.