

### Introduction

It is generally accepted by governing bodies that the hierarchy of fall protection should provide the starting point for considering what type of fall protection system is required.

Source: <http://doshtihome.blogspot.com/2016/02/personal-fall-arrest-and-fall-restraint.html>

### 1. Eliminate the Risk

Avoid work at height where possible or locate plant and equipment in safe locations where there is no risk of a fall.

### 2. Guard the Hazard

When working at height is essential, ensure that workers are not exposed to unnecessary risks; consider providing a parapet or guardrail to eliminate the fall hazard.

### 3. Protect the Worker

Where it is not possible to eliminate the risk of falling, use suitable fall protection system to minimise the consequences of a fall. This can be achieved with a fall arrest or fall restraint system—two completely different entities.

In essence, a fall restraint system prevents workers from reaching a hazard, while a fall arrest system allows workers to reach a hazard and then protects them if they should fall.

### 4. Fall Restraint

These systems allow a person access to conduct their duties but prevent them from reaching a point where a fall could occur. Fall Restraint systems are generally suitable if the person needs to work at the edge of a hazard. For example, where there is a need to maintain gutters along the edge of a roof, or if there are other potential fall hazards such as a fragile roof, roof lights or air vents. If fitting a fall restraint system, it is recommended that the system should be tested to fall arrest loads to ensure a person's safety in situations where the system may be misused (i.e. when the person using it wears an over-length lanyard to enable access to the edge of a roof).

Restraint systems are generally positioned more than 2 m from the hazard. This is because common practice is for the worker to be connected to the system by a fixed length 1.5 m lanyard.

### Fall Protection Hierarchy



### 5. Fall Arrest

A fall arrest system provides maximum freedom of movement for workers to conduct their duties. In doing so it allows them to reach the point where a fall could occur, such as the edge of a roof for gutter maintenance. However, in the event of a fall, the fall will be arrested and so allow the person to either effect a self-rescue or be rescued.

### Rescue

Following a fall, consideration must be given to the rescue of the worker – in fact, there is a legal obligation to have a full and comprehensive rescue plan in place when individuals are working at height

C

By [deleted]  
[cheatography.com/deleted-2754/](https://cheatography.com/deleted-2754/)

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