

# FASET Bulletin SN16 (Revision 3)

## Working Above a Safety Net



BS EN 1263-1 Safety Nets (greater than 35m<sup>2</sup> and 5m minimum side length) are subjected to a type test involving a 100kg mass falling 7m (6m plus an allowance for the height of the centre of gravity of a human). The nominal acceptable total fall energy is therefore 6kJ on a new net.

Within the UK, safety nets are utilised as a primary means of fall protection by those working at height, such as roof workers & Metal decking / flooring installers. Therefore, they must be rigged as close as is reasonably practicable to the underside of the working platform (i.e. roof / floor / deck) and never more than 2 meters.



The number of workers protected by an individual Safety Net that complies with BS EN 1263-1 & 2, must be contained within the capacity of the net. Therefore, for a 2m maximum fall height, and allowing 100kg per worker including tools, this would set the recommended maximum number of 2 workers over any section of Safety Net.

If more than 2 workers are required to work above a section of Safety Net, a specific risk assessment should be completed to assess the risk of more than 2 workers falling into the Safety Net simultaneously. If the risk is deemed to be low, then more than 2 workers may be able to work above the Safety Net.

For an increase of safety factor, the use of B-specification BS EN 1263-1 Safety Nets should be considered.

### Secondary Protection Whilst Working Above Safety Nets

Safety Nets are normally used as the primary means of passive collective protection due to the close proximity of the safety net system to the working level. Safety Nets are rigged to the underside of the structure. For this reason, the use of an additional fall arrest system is not necessary.

If, by risk assessment it is considered that Personal Fall Protection Equipment (PFPE) should be used, those responsible need to consider:

- **Fall restraint** is generally not practicable and frequently creates additional hazards. Erecting fall restraint adds risk to operatives and also slips and trips. With teams of workers operating in close proximity to each other, this method of work is often not practicable.
- **Fall arrest** lanyards are not appropriate in these situations because there will be insufficient distance to deploy. In many situations, they are likely to hinder rescue efforts from within the safety net, in line with Net Rescue Plans.

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