

What is the height for roof top parapet, and distance from roof for safety line?

The height of permanent guardrail/parapet is 1100mm from the working surface (Build Regulations & BS 13700). If the guardrail is of a temporary nature, then BS EN 13374 would apply and the height for this application is >950mm. The distance a horizontal lifeline from any leading edge should be designed as a minimum of 2.5m (A design risk assessment should be completed as this recommended minimum distance may need to increase on merit of proposal).

Is there an existing equivalent standard, ANSI, AS/NZS?

The CSA fall protection competence standard is CSA Z259.2; it outlines the requirements for a worker to be considered competent in fall protection practices, including the knowledge and skills needed to safely use fall protection equipment and procedures in the workplace.

The ANSI fall protection competence standard is ANSI/ASSP Z359.1; it outlines the requirements for a "competent person" in fall protection, detailing the knowledge and skills needed to properly select, use, and maintain fall protection equipment and systems, as well as identify and address fall hazards in the workplace.

The "AS fall protection competence standard" refers to the Australian Standard (AS) that outlines the required level of competency for individuals working in fall protection roles, typically denoted as AS/NZS 1891.1:2020 - Fall protection - Selection, use and maintenance of fall protection equipment.

Is there a difference between summer and winter equipment?

Some fall protection equipment manufacturers produce different products for different climates, but generally no difference in most parts of UK. Check with the manufacturer to ensure you purchase the correct product for the given location and temperature range.

We have been told of insurance companies inspecting fall arrest equipment under LOLER regulations, what are your views on this?

There is a distinct difference between fall arrest equipment inspected in alignment with the PPE regulations and lifting equipment where LOLER Regulations apply. It is essential that the inspector has the required competence to carry out the given inspection.

Would this be captured in the Health & Safety file produced by the Principal Designer?

BS 8681 & BS 7883 should guide the principal designer in ensuring this element of the H&S file are adequate.

Are there any standards which says that on a 100% safe scaffold platform fall protection equipment not be required partially or fully?

During the construction of a scaffold, fall protection equipment must be used by those building the collective protection solution. It's essential the users are competent to use the equipment provided in alignment with the risk assessment considering fall clearance requirements and rescue provision. Once fully constructed, boarded and guardrailed, the scaffold provides the collective solution and workers do not need to utilise personal fall protection equipment.

Does this standard also cover equipment used for working at height using MEWPS or towers etc?

This standards scope does not include IPAF or PASMA training requirements. Please refer to the web sites for both IPAF & PASMA guidance.

Can we assume this (BS 8681) is for horizontal fixed anchor points on buildings and rooftops (Anchor pull testing) and not for vertical FAS systems on towers and masts?

This standard establishes the required competence of fall protection providers, and this includes equipment installed on any structure including masts & towers.

Can the system designer also be the installer?

In theory the System Designer can also be the installer providing the individual has the required competence to conduct both roles.

Can a company be considered/signed off as competent, rather than an individual?

The company must follow the required protocols (Legislation/Regulations/Standards & Best Practice) to act in a professional capacity. The individuals working within the business are required to have sufficient competence to fulfil their role at the level of their position within the business.

Is there an accreditation or an 'approved list' for 'System Designers' installer etc. and if so, where can this be found?

There is not a list of approved System Designers. The industry is developing a training program for this occupation which is likely to be available during late 2026.

How does this standard affect manufacturer specific training?

Manufacturer specific training will still need to be provided. This training will build towards the required competence of the System Designer, Installer & Inspector.

Can you clarify whether someone who has an MSA latchway inspectors' certificate, and has been working in the fall protection industry for a minimum of 10 years will still require a NVQ level 3 certificate to inspect fall protection systems? If so, what timescale is being given for this training to be in place?

Since 2015 the Construction Leadership Council requested the construction industry to deliver nationally recognised qualifications for all occupations and hence gradually withdrawn "Industry Accredited" schemes facilitating the issuing of a CSCS cards.

All CSCS cards were withdrawn from all construction sectors on the 31st of December 2024. CSCS cards will only be renewed upon evidence of an appropriate qualification for the occupation. The fall protection industry has developed the Fall Protection Technician - Permanent Solutions Trailblazer and more recently the non-funded NVQ level 3 Access & Rigging Diploma - Pathway 7 Fall Arrest. These are vocational training options that can be accessed now via contacting a training provider (8Point8 Doncaster - David Ravensdale).

When will level 3 NVQ training be available and how long will the course take?

The NVQ Level 3 is available now via 8Point8 Training - Doncaster - David Ravensdale. Duration is around 12-15 months but dependent on evidencing prior learning.

Does that standard cover retrofitted edge protection or strictly cover the personal fall protection?

The standard can apply to edge protection installation Installers & Inspectors as those working in these occupations must be able to evidence competence.

Does BS 8681 supersede BS 7883?

No – BS 7883 relates to the products, system design, installation, and inspection process. BS 8681 relates to the competence of those fall protection providers delivering the projects.

What is SIPP?

Safety Schemes in Procurement.

What is the frequency for audits?

Internal audits are recommended every year. External audits are recommended at least every three years.

Is it not the case that BS 8681:2024 requires that external audits be carried out at least annually to ensure ongoing compliance with the standard?

Standards are not mandatory, however, to claim compliance to the standard one must follow the requirements detailed in the standard. Most businesses operating in the fall protection industry sign up to Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) and the providers of such schemes audit annually, hence via this mechanism the requirements of BS 8681 will be monitored via SSIP providers going forward.

Is there an implementation period for this standard, considering the L3 course is not yet available and the big changes the standard brings? Also, would an engineer with a L4 or L5 engineering qualification (for example in mechanical engineering) still be required to complete the full L3 course mentioned to be termed a 'competent inspector' in accordance with BS 8681?

Unfortunately, there is no "grace period" and those claiming compliance with the standard must meet the standards requirements. Please note there is no mandatory requirement to comply to the standard, however "best practice" would suggest it's in the interest of those operating within the industry to comply with the standard ASAP.

In answer to the second part of the question, providing an individual trained to NVQ level 4-5 can evidence the required competence to install or inspect at NVQ level 3 then there may not be a requirement to complete the whole of the NVQ Level 3 qualification. They may need to complete just a few units to evidence the required training and competence.

Any plans for the same for edge protection systems?

This standard can be used by those providing other systems - please refer to the scope note 6 of BS 8681.

Is this going to affect the tree surgeon industry and their current certification and training?

Tree surgery is a specialist occupation and BS 8681 may be used to complement specialist occupational training.

Are auditors in place now and if not, when might they be ready?

Auditors are available and are required to meet the requirements of Section 5 of the standard and conduct the audit in alignment with Annex C of the standard.

Does this new BS 8681 affect England only or will it fall in with Scotland and NI rules as their designers may need to work to other requirements in line with HSENI?

The Standard is applicable throughout the UK.

What qualifications must auditors have to be able to undertake BS 8681:2024 audits?

The recommended auditor qualifications are detailed in Section 5 of the standard. "An example of a suitable qualification would be a BS EN ISO 9001/BS EN ISO 45001 lead auditor under BS ISO/IEC 17021 (all parts) and/or BS EN ISO/IEC 17065." **If I don't have the installed specification for the anchor system - what remedies are there?**

You will need to conduct a survey and complete a design risk assessment which may involve some reverse engineering to confirm the system is safe. Alternatively hire the services of a competent Consultant to complete this work in alignment with the requirements of BS 7883 Annex J - also refer to the BSI web site and download the latest BS 7883 bulletin regarding legacy installations, providing the installation was prior to November 2019.

If replacing a system like for like - will it need to be validated by a system designer if the first system was installed prior to this new standard?

The System Designer will have to be consulted to ensure the system is designed correctly and is compliant.

Does this standard affect fall protection on scaffolding?

No.

If you have inherited an existing system with ad hoc as built information and know the systems were deemed not to be used and so not tested for several years where would be best to start?

A full system review is required to be completed by a competent System Designer.

Regarding the NVQ qualification, is there going to be an option to fast-track through this award, depending on industry experience?

The training provider of the NVQ Level 3 Access & Rigging qualification - pathway 7 will assess an individuals evidenced prior learning and detail the units, if any that will need to be completed to be awarded the qualification.

What is the cost of the NVQ against a CSCS card?

There are two routes that are available to be awarded an NVQ qualification. The industry Fall Protection Technician - Permanent Solutions Trailblazer is a funded route and the NVQ Level 3 Access & Rigging Diploma - Pathway 7 Fall protection is a non-funded route.

Once you are registered for one of the above qualifications you can apply for a CSCS card and when you complete one of the above routes you will be awarded a blue or gold CSCS card. Companies with a payroll under the apprenticeship levy requirement may benefit from grants by joining CITB.

Does the apprenticeship have the same Maths and English requirements as some other apprenticeships do?

Yes, the apprenticeship has the requirements for English & Maths due to the level of the qualification and nature of installing/inspecting safety critical equipment. Working with the training provider can assist with the challenges some delegates may have with English & Maths.

Do I need the NVQ level 3 to do inspections for harnesses and rope kits?

You need to evidence the required level competence to complete the inspections you are performing.

All our engineers have a level 2 NVQ, is 5 days needed to move up to level 3?

The number of days and additional units will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Is a Limited company able to put Subcontractors through the NVQ?

You would not be able to use the Fall Protection Technician - Permanent Solutions Trailblazer as you are not the employer. However, the NVQ Level 3 Access & Rigging Diploma - Pathway 7 Fall Protection may be an option for you to fund the course for your sub-contractors.

Will the introduction and managing of these standards be better introduced and enforced than BS 7883 which appear to only recently be being enforced by the industry, particularly the maintainers, which has resulted in many organisations finding themselves with unavailable systems due to an absence of compliant technical manuals, especially on older installed systems, despite maintainers not taking the current stance between 2019 and the back end of 2024?

The hope of the fall protection industry is to ensure BS 8681 gains traction very quickly. The BSIF (HSG) webinar was well attended and in real terms launches the standard. Unfortunately, BS 7883 was published shortly before COVID, and this no doubt impacted the standards traction.

What's the title of each of the levels of NVQ?

For the Installer - Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Accessing Operations & Rigging (Construction) - Fall Arrest

For the Fall Protection Technician/Inspector - Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Accessing Operations & Rigging (Construction) - Fall Arrest or Fall Protection Technician Standard (ST0614) (Approved Apprenticeship).

Are there any companies out there currently who can provide an external audit?

There are companies available and its essential they are competent and follow Annex C of BS 8681.

When will other training providers be on board as it seems 1 provider only may be restrictive?

The fall protection industry is a very small niche sector and it's doubtful that there are the commercial numbers of delegates for the larger training organisations to invest in the training of this sector. Time will tell.

Do IRATA competent personnel need to subscribe to this standard or are they already compliant via IRATA standards (when installing temporary anchors)?

The required competence to install fall protection products is detailed within BS 8681 and this occupational competence would need to be compared with an individuals evidenced competence to ensure alignment.

Who audits the auditors?

Auditors should have a formal auditing qualification i.e., ISO Lead Auditor and evidence that they have relevant industry experience. They should preferably be a member of CQI (Chartered Quality Institute) and/or registered with IRQA (International Register of Certified Auditors).