

Rescue From A Safety Net During Metal Decking Operations

The purpose of the Net Rescue Plan is to give operatives guidance and education to perform a basic rescue of a colleague out of a Safety Net when safe to do so. All UKMDA Members' Metal Decking and Thru Deck Stud Welding (where applicable) Operatives must attend an Emergency First Aid at Work Course in addition to formalised Safety Net Rescue training every three years where they will be informed of:

- Falls
- How a Safety net works
- The Importance of Clearance Distance
- How a Safety Net behaves under tension
- Work at Height Regulations
- Planning a Rescue
- Rescue Techniques
- Rescue Equipment Requirements
- Isolating the affected area
- Responsibilities for the removal of the casualty from the building/structure
- Practical sessions in Safety nets including: Self Rescue, Rescue from within the net, Rescue from below the net, Rescue from MEWP



Figure 1. Safety Net Rescue Training

The following points need to be taken into consideration when planning a Safety Net Rescue:

- Identify Rescue route and First Aid Station on Site
- Check Rescue Kit is available on site
- Is it safe to effect a rescue – are you putting yourself or the casualty at further risk?
- Always consider the casualty – is it medically appropriate to attempt rescue?
- Contact emergency services if required (do not rely on them for rescue)
- Procedure for reporting the fall into the net to site management and the installation company
- Stop work above the affected netted area until it is replaced

All UKMDA Member's Metal Decking and Thru Deck Stud Welding Teams (as appropriate) will carry equipment with them to enable them to carry out a safe rescue as prescribed in the rescue plan. This may include a ladder, first aid kit and a means of cutting the safety net.

With suitable controls on site, the overall risk of a fall into a Safety Net is very low.

However UKMDA recognise the four following methods of Safety Net Rescue that could potentially be used, in the order listed:

1. Self Rescue from Above
2. Rescue from Below (direct access to the casualty from the floor below)
3. Rescue from Above (Up to two operatives entering the net to rescue a casualty)
4. Rescue from Below (using a MEWP)

The Operatives are trained in Safety Net Rescue procedures and will make an assessment of the faller and situation prior to considering which method of rescue is to be used. All affected areas will be cordoned off whilst the rescue takes place and until the Safety Net has been replaced or another net has been put in place. The Safety Net installation company and the client must be informed about the incident, and the area affected. All falls into Safety Nets should be reported to FASET to assist with their collation of accident statistics.

Safety Net Rescue Scenarios

In all cases of a fall into a Safety Net, the operatives carrying out the rescue should quickly assess the condition of the faller and immediately call the emergency services where there is any concern over their condition.

Rescue from Above

Self-Rescue – where an Operative has fallen into the Safety Net but is able to self rescue by climbing back out of the Safety Net. If the faller finds it difficult to climb out of the Safety Net back onto the Metal Decking working level his partner will extend the ladder and place the stiles into the mesh of the Safety Net and support the ladder at the working level. The operative will then be able to climb up the ladder back to the working level.



*Figure 2. A deflected safety net following a self-rescue from a fall.
Image courtesy of Safety Net Services.*

Using additional Operative(s) – the Safety Net is capable of taking the weight of up to 3 operatives at a time. An operative will place the stiles of the ladder into the mesh of the Safety Net and support the it at the working level. Up to two operatives will gain access into the Safety Net down the ladder, ideally approaching the operative being rescued from opposite sides in order to even the load on the net. They will make an assessment of the faller and if it is deemed safe to do so they will assist the faller onto the ladder to climb out of the Safety Net.

Rescue from Below

Rescue when the faller is within reach of the floor below - the rescuer will take rescue kit to the floor directly below. They will make an assessment of the faller and if it is deemed safe to do so they will commence rescue. Where the operative is safe to rescue, the rescue team will support the faller

whilst the net is cut to allow the faller safe access to the floor directly below the net. If the faller needs further support, the rescue team will extend the Ladder under the faller as a stretcher. The rescue team will secure the faller onto the ladder using the quick release straps and then cut the net around him. He will be lowered to the floor directly below the net.

Rescue using a MEWP - the rescuer will take the rescue kit to the MEWP identified for rescue. They will elevate themselves to reach the casualty and make an assessment of the faller and if it is deemed safe to do so they will commence rescue. Where it is safe to carry out the rescue, the rescue team will extend the Ladder on the handrails of the basket and secure the ladder to the basket using the quick release straps. They will elevate the ladder under the faller as a stretcher. The rescue team will secure the faller onto the ladder using the quick release straps and then cut the net around him. The casualty will be lowered to the floor/ground.

PLEASE NOTE: WHERE IT IS SAFE TO DO SO, UKMDA OPERATIVES WILL EFFECT A RESCUE. HOWEVER, IF IT IS DEEMED TOO DANGEROUS TO EFFECT A RESCUE, OR WHERE THE FALLERS INJURIES PREVENT THEIR SAFE MOVEMENT, THE EMERGENCY SERVICES WILL ASSIST WITH THE RESCUE.