

LKL Safety Note



Working Safely Around Silage Clamps

Work at Height remains one of the highest hazards in Agriculture with falls from height resulting in serious injury and fatalities.

There are numerous examples of fall from height type accidents when working on and around silage clamps and work should involve careful planning and risk assessment. The biggest issue with silage pits is the chance of slips and trips and falls from heights. Hazards to think about include how you gain access to the top of your silage clamp, maybe to remove plastic sheeting and tyres, and what work you do close to the edge such as cutting back the silage sheet or sampling. A fall from the open edge of the clamp can often be in excess of 3 metres and you may land directly onto concrete.

A Regional Manager learnt of a recent incident when a member of the Dairy team was cutting back the silage sheet and standing with his back to the edge, he slipped and fell 5 metres onto the concrete floor below. He was working alone and was found unconscious a sometime later and emergency services were called.

Here are some Top Tips to Stay Safe when working on and around Silage Clamps

No Lone Working

- Work at Height should always be a two-person job.
- Let other staff know where you are and what you are doing.
- Carry your mobile phone and have emergency numbers programmed in.
- Consider using a 'worker-down' type app that can send alerts to your key contacts.
- Wear Hi Visibility jackets/vests
- Wear slip resistant footwear with good grip
- Consider also wearing a hard hat, ATV type helmet etc.

Follow Safe Systems of Work for Working at Height

- Accessing the top of the clamp - make sure there is a safe way up, or if there are no fixed steps, then use other equipment such as a secure ladder or working platform or scaffold tower
- Ideally have edge protection such as handrails on the pit walls and stay away from a cut front face.
- Be aware of a gap or soft area between the clamp pit wall and the silage.
- For front face sampling, use the loader bucket to dig out a small area and collect a sample from the bucket. Never collect a sample directly from the silage face, if it is more than your head height. Move away from the silage face before exiting the loader.
- **Under no circumstances climb onto a stack of silage bales.** They could move and trap or injure you. Use a telehandler to move bales to a safe area on the ground
- **Stop working if conditions become dangerous**, for example, strong winds or low light.

Remember – it may take a few moments to assess and plan your task, but recovering from a fall may take months, years or even the rest of your life.

Plan your Work at Height.

Remember that the edges of silage can be crumbling; plastic sheeting may be damp or icy. **The Work at Height Legislation** requires you to risk assess your work at height and use procedures that prevent falls or mitigate the risk of injury from falls. In order to do that you need to be working from work equipment with a suitable secure guarded platform or using a work restraint system or working behind a rail if working on top of the clamp e.g., removing sheets.



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Detailed below are some potential practical solutions to be considered when you plan your work to reduce the risk of falls from height.

- On Concrete walled Silage clamps ensure that there are adequate rails to prevent you falling off the sides.



The Safety rail or 'sight rail' is there to prevent you falling off the clamp during the sheeting and also as a guide for the telehandler driver when loading the clamp. The top rail should be at least 1100mm above height of the wall and there should be an intermediate rail half way up.

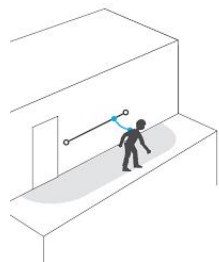
- Take care when standing on a full clamp. As a good rule of thumb never stand closer to the edge of the feed out face than the height of the silage.

- Take extra precautions to prevent or mitigate falls. **Here are some ideas: -**

- For indoor silage clamps, here at LKL we like this innovative solution to safer access to the side with fixed stairs and protecting the open cutting edge of the clamp when pulling back the sheet with taught webbing restraints, which you can work behind. (Could be used anywhere with good guard rails)



- Use a Work Restraint consisting of a safety harness and short safety rope/lanyard



Work Restraint - is a technique whereby a person is prevented - by means of personal fall protection equipment - from reaching zones where the risk of a fall from a height exists. This system is not designed to arrest a fall but the short lanyard should prevent you getting near the edge in the first place. The Lanyard should be fixed to a



suitable strong fixing point or fixing eye designed for that purpose.

- Consider removing the tyres and pulling back the sheeting by using a long-handled tool, which allows you to stand well back as well as work restraint.

- Use of more recent innovation for silage clamps and sheeting such as 'Silage Safe' systems

- Use work equipment operating from the ground level to remove spoiled silage from the surface of a bunker or pile e.g., scaffold tower, platform or telehandler working platform attachment.



- Access the sheet by using safe working platforms attached to telehandlers.

- A positive locking system must be used too, in a way whereby the basket can't accidentally fall off, for example, behind the heels of the fork arms. See [this article by Farmers weekly](https://www.fwi.co.uk/machinery/working-height-need-know) for more info on safe mobile working platforms



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