

Technical Guidance Bulletin 02

# Pack Positioning and Access for Decking Operatives

Falls from height are the largest single cause of accidental death in the construction industry. But can be prevented if an effective system of work is planned and adhered to. As metal decking installation is carried out at height, pack positioning and access locations should form a fundamental part of the planning and installation process.

## Off-Loading and Hoisting

Arrangements for offloading and hoisting of packs, both deck and edge trims, should be pre-planned and are generally carried out by the steelwork contractor. This allows the packs to be positioned as the steel frame is erected and is often the safest and most cost effective method as the steel erectors have craneage, lift supervisors and powered access equipment on site.

The decking delivery and steel erection programme should be coordinated to allow the materials to be delivered and lifted onto the structure as it is erected. This will avoid the hazards relating to passing decking bundles through several floors of steelwork.

## Pack Positioning

The Decking Contractor will provide loading out drawings indicating the required positions for individual bundles, the direction of span and orientation of the bundle.

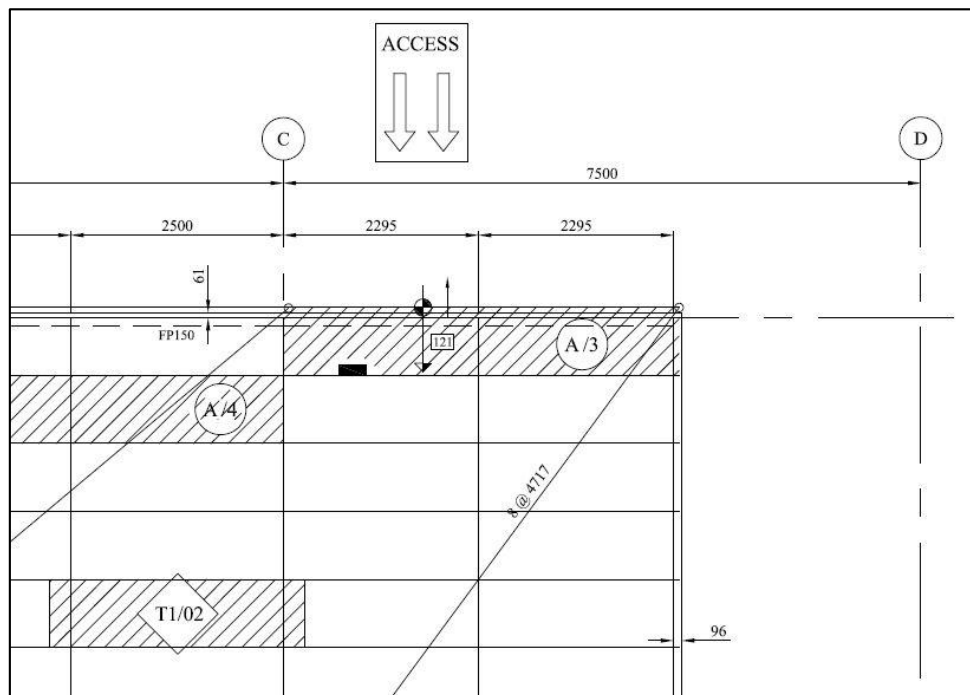


Figure 1. An example of a typical decking layout drawing.

Each decking bundle has an ID tag and must be loaded out onto the steelwork as indicated on the layout drawing. This greatly reduces the risks associated with working at height, traversing the steelwork and the amount of manual handling required.

Every decking sheet has an over and under-lap edge and all packs must be positioned on the steel frame in the correct orientation. This enables the decking to be laid progressively without the need to rotate the sheets through 180°. To identify leading edges, the decking bundles will usually be marked with a paint flash or sticker along a common side.

Packs should be staggered, as detailed on the layout drawing, to ensure the sheets can be lifted without obstruction and the packs must never be double stacked.

If packs cannot be loaded out in strict accordance with the layout drawings the decking contractor must be contacted to agree alternative positions. Failure to agree this often results in the need to re-position packs by mechanical means.

Edge trims should be hoisted to level by crane or other mechanical plant and positioned on the steel frame in accordance with the layout drawing. Location is of particular importance to ensure that the trim bundle can be opened and accessed safely.

### **Access for Decking Operatives**

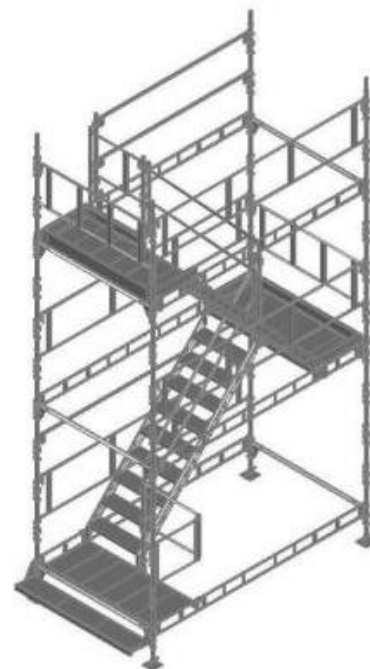
Arrangements for access to level for the decking operatives should be carefully planned and is often provided by the main contractor.

Consideration for the access location and sequence of works should be made at an early stage and communicated to the decking contractor. This allows the pack positions and direction of lay to be arranged to greatly reduce the risks associated with working at height, traversing the steelwork and the amount of manual handling required.

Careful planning will also ensure that the access does not obstruct the installation of the decking or the fall-arrest system resulting in the need for adaptations.

Consideration for safe access and egress is required to each working area and level.

Permanent or temporary stair access should be provided to the working level, wherever practicable. Alternative methods may be suitable upon consideration of factors such as height, provision for lifting of tools and equipment, removal of waste and emergency procedures.



*Figure 2. An example of a suitable temporary access solution*