

# Rigging Height Limit Exclusions in Liability Insurance

## Info Sheet by TNA

Updated February 2025

Several CaPT artists and companies have encountered a newly imposed limit on circus rigging above 11 metres. TNA has been advised that some underwriters may be imposing this limit due to a mistaken belief that this reflects height limits in accreditation or safety standards for circus rigging.

### Height Limits in Australian Accreditation

- Work Safe has confirmed there is **no height limit on rigging tickets** in Australia—all of them are [High Risk Work Licences](#)<sup>i</sup> and even the lowest level of accreditation allows rigging at any height. (Work Safe has offered to provide this advice in writing if necessary.)
- The only mention of an 11m limit in any safe work accreditation capacity is that you must hold a High Risk Work Licence [in order to operate a Boom Lift \(Elevating Work Platform\) with a boom over 11 metres](#)<sup>ii</sup>.
- For the avoidance of doubt—**operating an EWP is a wholly distinct activity from rigging**. Much rigging work does not require EWP use, and while many riggers also hold an EWP High Risk Work Licence (as a handy additional licence), this is in addition to their Rigging HRWLs, and whether they hold this additional licence or not has no bearing on their capacity to rig at any height.

### About Australian Rigging Accreditation

- Rigging is a licenced occupation in Australia, and all circus riggers are required to hold a [High Risk Work Licence \(HRWL\)](#)<sup>iii</sup>.
- There are four levels of rigging accreditation: [Dogging](#)<sup>iv</sup>, [Basic](#)<sup>v</sup>, [Intermediate](#)<sup>vi</sup> and [Advanced](#)<sup>vii</sup>
- High Risk Work Licences are expensive to obtain (around \$1200 per level), with many hours of study, onsite training, and stringent assessment conditions.
- These courses qualify riggers to manage risks and perform rigging work across all industries, from small-scale internal theatre rigging through to crane construction and maintenance on large-scale, high-rise construction projects.
- All courses include training in risk management and strict safety protocols, including preparation and use of Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS).

### Rigging Safety in Australian Circus

- Circus riggers are legally required to hold a Basic Rigging licence, which allows them to rig for any height and for all standard circus acts.
- Safety is taken extremely seriously in circus. Performers are elite athletes who rely on their bodies as their livelihoods. Riggers and performers work closely with show and venue personnel to ensure that artistic vision can be realised at its highest level of safety.
- Circus venues, shows, riggers and individual artists who present acts involving risk routinely use Risk Management Plans (RMPs) and/or [Safe Work Method Statements \(SWMS\)](#)<sup>viii</sup> to manage and mitigate risks.

- It is not a formal industry safety standard nor a Work Safe requirement to have an Advanced License when rigging humans, although Live Performance Australia (LPA) encourages the industry to work towards this as best practice whenever reasonable.

## **Aerial Performance and Rigging in Circus**

- There are varied levels of risk in circus aerials and rigging.
- Rigging for circus is often suspended from around 20m in height, and in rarer circumstances, such as arenas and cranes, it can be from much higher (up to ~50m).
- Circus riggers (and sometimes performers) will often be working at up to 20 metres.
- Performers generally stay between 8m–15m, however acts performing at greater heights are not unusual, and there is no legislated limit.

---

<sup>i</sup> <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/managing-health-and-safety/licences>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/elevating-work-platforms/overview#:~:text=Training%20and%20licences%20for%20elevating,let%20them%20do%20this%20work.>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/high-risk-work-licence>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://training.gov.au/training/details/CPCCLDG3001/unitdetails>

<sup>v</sup> <https://training.gov.au/training/details/CPCCLRG3001/unitdetails>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://training.gov.au/training/details/CPCCLRG3002/unitdetails>

<sup>vii</sup> <https://training.gov.au/training/details/CPCCLRG4001/unitdetails>

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/interactive-swms-tool>