Mezzanine Floors: Taking Your Workspace to Another Level

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Mezzanine floors are structures which are semi-permanent and that create an additional level between the current floor and the roof. They create additional space in a cost-effective way. If you wish to expand your business but don't have the budget to relocate or add an extension to your premises, mezzanine floors are an ideal solution as they literally double the floor space available.

There are many ways that mezzanine floors can be used: for storage purposes as well as office and retail areas, manufacturing areas, working areas and plant support structures. Their versatility is unlimited and they are a highly cost-efficient way of increasing the amount of floor space available.

Mezzanine floors have further uses, however. They can be used by businesses that want to maximise space but move into premises that are smaller and more cost-effective. If you are running your business from more than one site, you could consider how feasible it is to merge your operations into one premises by introducing a mezzanine floor to create the additional space that you need.

Here are a few things for you to consider before implementing mezzanine floors.

Headroom

The most important aspect to take into account before introducing mezzanine floors is how much headroom is available. Generally, the minimum roof height required for appropriate headroom at both levels is approximately 4,500 metres.

Loading

Although the purpose of mezzanine floors is to suit the requirements of the customer, they are also required to comply with the criteria set by the Building Regulations and BRE Digest 437.

Use

How mezzanine floors are used is very important as it will have an effect on the implementation requirements set by Building Regulations. If you intend to use it for retail purposes or as a working area, you should consider appropriate access for disabled people in accordance with the Building Regulations part M. You can usually achieve this by fitting an appropriate moving ramp, similar to an escalator. When used for such purposes, mezzanine levels will need to align with tighter escape and fire safety requirements than storage platforms. Risk assessments will need to be carried out and the mezzanine floor designed appropriately.

Escape and access

You generally access mezzanine floors via a staircase or moving ramp. You need to think about the best position for your staircase in order for the floor to be suitable for your business. You also need to consider the best location in relation to fire exits in order to reduce the travelling distance to an exit if you need to escape. Building Regulations have set a maximum travel distance and with this in mind, you will need to fit more staircases on larger mezzanine floors.

Support legs

Typically, mezzanine floors are free-standing, separate from the structure of the building, and are supported on their own columns. Where these columns are positioned and how many there are is flexible and their design can be based around customer requirements and certain site conditions. As a rule, however, the fewer columns accounted for in the design, the more costly the structure.

Decking surface

Most mezzanine floors have a 38mm board decking that is highly versatile and provides a hard and strong wearing surface appropriate for a number of uses.

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