



## SAFETY AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION: CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN RISK PREVENTION AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

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### ABSTRACT

The study seeks to reflect on the importance of occupational safety in working at heights during public building maintenance, emphasizing organizational challenges and structural proposals that may contribute to risk mitigation. Methodologically, the research is developed through bibliographic review and documentary analysis, with data interpretation based on categorical content analysis. The investigation is relevant as it highlights the importance of safety in activities performed at heights in public buildings with high circulation, since the results indicate that analyzing recurring failures and adopted preventive measures supports the implementation of management systems that promote a culture of prevention and significantly reduce accident rates. The study contributes to broadening the understanding of height safety in public administration; socially, it reinforces its ethical dimension by valuing life, dignity, and human integrity in public service.



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### I. INTRODUCTION

Work at height is widely recognized as one of the occupational activities that pose the greatest risks to workers' physical integrity and lives, which is why it requires rigorous planning, technical training, and effective preventive measures. According to Regulatory Standard No. 35 (NR-35), established by Ordinance MTE No. 313 of March 23, 2012, work at height is defined as any activity performed at a height greater than two meters above the lower level, where there is a risk of falling [1]. The regulation establishes several mandatory requirements, such as worker training, the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the preparation of a Preliminary Risk Analysis (PRA), and a Work Permit (WP) [2]. Nevertheless, accidents related to these activities remain at high levels, revealing a gap between legislation and its effective application, especially in the public sector.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Observatory, Brazil recorded a total of 499,955 occupational accidents in 2023, of which 2,888 resulted in death [3]. Among the most lethal causes, falls from height stand out, particularly in the construction, industrial, and public service sectors, where working conditions frequently expose professionals to high risks. A study conducted by the former Ministry of Labor in partnership with Revista Proteção indicates that about 40% of occupational accidents in the country are directly or indirectly related to work-at-height activities [4]. This data reinforces the urgency of implementing more effective public policies and safety practices aimed at prevention, worker training, and enforcement of standards, in order to reduce the recurrence of serious accidents and preserve lives in the workplace.

In the construction industry, the severity of falls from height is even more alarming: 65% of accidents involve this type of occurrence, and more than half result in death [5]. In Rio Grande do Sul, the scenario is equally concerning. In 2023, 384 work-related deaths were recorded, representing a 35% increase compared to 2022. Among these cases, 320 were typical accidents, 63 were commuting accidents, and 1 was due to occupational illness. It is noteworthy that workers with precarious employment relationships—such as self-

employed and unregistered workers—accounted for 50.01% of fatal typical accidents, with self-employed individuals representing 38.13% of occurrences [6].

These data highlight the vulnerability of these professionals and the urgency of protection policies that strengthen inspection, promote formalization, and ensure safe working conditions. Although the public sector does not always appear prominently in sectoral reports, its importance within the context of occupational safety is undeniable. Public buildings such as schools, universities, hospitals, and administrative offices frequently require maintenance work at height, including roof repairs, façade restoration, and electrical and hydraulic maintenance. When poorly planned, such activities place both permanent and outsourced workers in high-risk situations. This reality is exacerbated by outdated infrastructure, irregular maintenance contracts, and the absence of standardized safety protocols. The combination of these factors reveals a concerning scenario that demands public authorities' attention toward the implementation of effective prevention and inspection policies to ensure safe working conditions and prevent serious or fatal accidents in institutional environments widely used by the population.

In this context, the present article aims to critically reflect on the importance of occupational safety in work-at-height activities during public building maintenance, focusing on organizational challenges and structural proposals that may contribute to risk mitigation. The objective is to discuss, in light of current legislation and empirical data, the main barriers to the effective implementation of height safety management in public institutions, while proposing ways to strengthen a culture of prevention, responsibility, and appreciation of life. Based on field experience and the theoretical support of administrative and occupational health sciences, this study seeks to contribute to the development of more effective public policies and to the improvement of public management in occupational safety. Workplace safety needs to be at the heart of public policies and competitiveness strategies, not only for legal reasons, but also for social justice and productive efficiency [7].

## II. METHODOLOGY

Regarding the procedures adopted, this investigation employs bibliographic review and documentary research. A literature review is a fundamental step because it allows the researcher to understand the state of the art on the topic, identify gaps in knowledge, and theoretically support the study with reliable and relevant information [8]. Documentary research involves the analysis of materials that have not received prior analytical treatment, such as official documents, reports, and historical archives, and is essential for understanding specific contexts and enriching the study with primary data [9]. For data interpretation, categorical content analysis was chosen, structured around four main categories: (1) The Role of Institutional Management in Risk Prevention; (2) Objective Responsibility in Public Service; (3) Safety as an Organizational Dimension; and (4) Social and Economic Impact. The analysis is a structured procedure that begins with pre-analysis, which consists of the careful selection of documents or materials to be analyzed, allowing the researcher to gain a general understanding of the material before conducting an in-depth examination [10]. After this initial stage, the treatment of results is carried out by organizing the content into thematic categories, grouping materials according to similarities or relationships identified in the information. Finally, during the interpretation of results stage, the researcher analyzes the categories, explores the relationships among them, and seeks significant patterns that may provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.

## III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### III.1 OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT

Occupational safety encompasses a set of technical, medical, and educational measures aimed at preventing accidents and occupational diseases, with the purpose of preserving the physical integrity and health of workers during the performance of their duties. Occupational safety management is an essential area that transcends the mere implementation of practices and policies, representing a profound commitment to the comprehensive protection of workers' health, safety, and well-being in the workplace [11]. This approach requires not only compliance with legal standards but also the promotion of an organizational culture that values life and fosters safe and humanized work environments. It becomes evident that occupational safety should be understood as a fundamental ethical value and a priority in both public and private management practices.

Prevention, within the context of occupational safety, consists of anticipating risks with the aim of eliminating or minimizing the likelihood of undesirable events. In this sense, risk analysis is a systematic process that identifies hazards, assesses the probability and severity of potential harm, and proposes control measures to protect workers' integrity. Risk analysis must be an integral part of any safety management system, as it provides the essential elements for decision-making that reduces exposure to hazards [12]. This tool is strategic for predicting critical scenarios, guiding preventive actions, and supporting effective managerial decisions. It can therefore be concluded that risk analysis is indispensable for preventive management committed to safety, health, and sustainability in work environments.

Work-related accidents are legally defined by Law No. 8,213/1991 as those occurring during the exercise of professional activities performed in the interest of a company or public agency, resulting in bodily injury, functional disturbance, or total or partial, temporary or permanent, loss of work capacity [13]. The same legislation establishes the obligation to issue a Work Accident Report (Comunicação de Acidente de Trabalho – CAT), an essential instrument for the formal recording of accidents and statistical control of occurrences [14]. The CAT plays a fundamental role in monitoring working conditions and formulating public policies aimed at prevention and the promotion of occupational health. Therefore, legal recognition and systematic reporting of accidents are essential steps in building safer work environments and ensuring institutional accountability for worker protection.

Regulatory Standard No. 35 (NR-35) establishes the minimum requirements and protective measures related to the safety of workers performing activities at height, defined as those carried out more than two meters above the lower level where there is a risk of falling. Among its requirements are specific worker training, the mandatory use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and the preparation of operational procedures and a Preliminary Risk Analysis (PRA), which aims to identify and mitigate hazards before task execution [15]. The regulation seeks to promote a culture of prevention, requiring both employers and employees to assume clear

responsibilities regarding safety. NR-35, therefore, represents an essential instrument to reduce serious accidents and preserve lives, especially in sectors such as construction, where working at height is frequent and high-risk.

In addition to NR-35, other standards complement the legislation on work-at-height safety, such as NR-06, which regulates the use of PPE, and NR-01, which establishes general provisions and guidelines for occupational risk management [16], [17]. With the modernization of Regulatory Standards initiated in 2019, the integration between the Risk Management Program (PGR) and preventive actions was strengthened, promoting a more systemic and effective approach to occupational safety management. This regulatory update reinforces prevention and shared responsibility between employers and workers, while the harmonization of these standards is fundamental for creating safer work environments, reducing accident rates, and promoting occupational health.

### III.2 SAFETY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

The management of occupational safety in public organizations represents a strategic challenge that transcends mere legal compliance. Unlike the private sector, public institutions operate in complex environments marked by rigid administrative structures, a multiplicity of sectors and responsibilities, and often limited budgetary resources. The consolidation of effective Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management in public organizations requires the creation of interdisciplinary working groups dedicated to the continuous supervision of OHS actions. In this context, the effective implementation of occupational safety policies requires coordinated efforts among different hierarchical levels, including managers, technicians, public servants, and outsourced companies.

Organizational culture in the public sector often lacks a systematic and preventive approach to occupational safety, with reactive practices that are only activated after accidents occur. This posture limits the effectiveness of protection measures and increases risks for workers. The Policy for Occupational Health and Safety of Federal Public Servants (PASS/SIASS) often prioritizes actions related to medical examinations to the detriment of preventive initiatives, resulting in fragmented governance and insufficient human and financial resources [18]. This scenario reinforces a reactive culture in which safety measures are intensified only after incidents, compromising the effectiveness of a systematic and proactive OHS approach. The absence of planning and investment in prevention undermines workplace health and safety, leading to greater vulnerability and higher accident rates.

Therefore, it is essential to promote a cultural shift that values continuous prevention, ensuring safer work environments and protecting the integrity of public servants. The adoption of an integrated approach involving health, safety, environment, labor, social security, and other sectors is crucial to overcome the intersectoral fragmentation that compromises the effectiveness of preventive actions. The National Policy on Workers Health and Safety (PNSST), established in 2004, reinforces this perspective by advocating for the formulation and implementation of transversal and intersectoral public policies capable of promoting coordinated actions among different levels of government [19]. This integration seeks to break with isolated practices, strengthening prevention as a strategic axis for worker protection.

Only through coordinated and committed action among various sectors will it be possible to advance in building safer, healthier, and more sustainable workplaces, particularly in the public sector, where the effects of fragmented management are still evident. The adoption of modern management tools, such as Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems based on ISO 45001:2018, has proven to be a promising alternative for public institutions. This international standard encourages the incorporation of safety as an institutional value and promotes the active participation of workers in hazard identification and the development of corrective measures [20]. Moreover, initiatives such as the institutionalization of PGR and the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) specifically for work-at-height activities are essential to ensure risk control and accident reduction.

Safety management in the public sector must align with the principles of good governance, transparency, efficiency, and accountability, ensuring that actions are responsibly planned, monitored, and evaluated. The institutionalization of risk management practices in public organizations significantly strengthens governance while fostering safer, more reliable, and more sustainable work environments [21]. This approach not only reduces accidents and health risks but also enhances public trust in institutions. Integrating occupational safety into public governance is thus an essential step toward ensuring the protection of public servants, the quality of services provided, and the effectiveness of public policies aimed at workplace well-being.

Understanding occupational safety in public institutions as a collective and cross-cutting responsibility is essential to ensure the effective protection of workers. This dimension should not be restricted to a specific department or isolated professionals but should permeate the entire structure of public management. Strengthening this perspective requires consistent institutional policies, specialized technical training, and, above all, a cultural shift that recognizes safety as an inseparable component of service quality and the valuation of life [22]. This transformation demands continuous commitment and coordination among different administrative areas, since promoting safety in the public sector is a shared duty that must be at the core of institutional decision-making, contributing to fairer, healthier, and more sustainable work environments.

### III.3 LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

Brazilian legislation establishes a robust set of norms and guidelines aimed at protecting workers' health and physical integrity, extending further by assigning specific responsibilities regarding safety in high-risk activities. Under Regulatory Standard NR-35, for example, employers are required to ensure the safe planning, organization, and execution of work-at-height activities, including risk analysis, worker training, adequate supervision, and formal authorization systems prior to the start of tasks [23]. These standards clearly delineate the legal responsibilities of employers, managers, and workers in relation to occupational safety, assigning them specific obligations in the planning, execution, and control of work activities—especially those involving elevated risks such as working at height.

The 1988 Federal Constitution is the primary legal framework guaranteeing occupational safety as a social right, establishing the reduction of work-related risks through health, hygiene, and safety regulations [24]. This guarantee is complemented by Article 157 of the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), which obliges employers to provide a safe and healthy work environment through the supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and the adoption of preventive measures [25]. These legal provisions establish a solid normative

framework that guides both the private and public sectors in promoting occupational safety, since adherence to these principles is essential to protect workers' health and uphold dignity in professional practice.

With regard to work at height, Regulatory Standard No. 35 (NR-35) stipulates that employers are responsible for conducting risk analyses, developing operational procedures, adequately training workers, and ensuring continuous supervision of activities [26]. Failure to comply with these obligations may result in administrative, civil, and even criminal sanctions, as provided by Law No. 8,213/1991, which addresses work accident benefits and liability in cases of omission [27]. These regulations reinforce the need for management committed to prevention and safety, as strict compliance with NR-35 and adherence to social security legislation are essential not only to protect lives but also to avoid legal consequences and strengthen a culture of responsibility in the workplace.

Legal responsibility for occupational safety in public institutions extends not only to direct employers but also to managers, public servants responsible for contract execution and supervision, and top administrators. Decree No. 10,024/2019, which regulates electronic procurement (pregão eletrônico), reinforces this obligation by requiring compliance with safety standards as part of contract management [28]. Negligence in contract supervision—especially in high-risk activities—may constitute an act of administrative misconduct, as established by Law No. 8,429/1992, updated by Law No. 14,230/2021 [29], [30]. These legal provisions demonstrate that omission is not merely an administrative failure but also subject to legal sanctions, affirming that compliance with occupational safety obligations is essential to the integrity of public management and the protection of workers' lives.

Labor jurisprudence has recognized the joint liability of public entities in cases of negligence in supervising the working conditions offered by outsourced companies, including building maintenance contracts. This understanding is supported by Precedent 331 of the Superior Labor Court (Tribunal Superior do Trabalho), which allows for the subsidiary liability of public administration when there is failure to supervise compliance with safety standards [31]. Thus, in public organizations, compliance with occupational safety obligations goes beyond formal requirements—it must be regarded as an institutional duty aimed at protecting life and the dignity of workers. It follows that noncompliance with these duties may entail serious legal consequences and compromise the legitimacy and accountability of administrative action within public management.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the four thematic axes is essential to understand the complexity of occupational safety in the public sector. Axis (1) highlights the strategic role of institutional management in risk prevention, emphasizing the importance of proactive policies. Axis (2) addresses the challenge of strict liability, which imposes on the State the obligation to repair damages even in the absence of direct fault, thus demanding greater rigor in supervision. Axis (3) examines safety as an organizational dimension, integrating it into institutional culture and practices. Finally, Axis (4) reveals the social and economic impact of accidents, which generate human, financial, and operational costs. Together, these axes offer a broad and articulated perspective, fundamental to guiding effective preventive actions and promoting safe, ethical, and sustainable work environments within public administration. More specifically:

##### IV.1 THE ROLE OF INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT IN RISK PREVENTION

The effectiveness of risk prevention actions in institutional environments is directly linked to the maturity level of institutional management. Public organizations that integrate safety policies into their governance systems demonstrate greater capacity to anticipate, mitigate, and monitor occupational risks. Institutionalizing risk management in the public sector promotes more predictable and rational decision-making and strengthens managerial accountability for the safety of both processes and people [32]. When treated as a strategic, rather than merely operational, function, risk management enables evidence-based decisions, reinforces organizational culture, and contributes to safer and more efficient workplaces. Investing in mature and integrated risk management is therefore essential to consolidating a safer, more responsible public administration aligned with principles of good governance.

Effective risk prevention in organizational settings requires leadership commitment, adequate resource allocation, and the implementation of tools such as the Risk Management Program (RMP) and internal audits [33]. Additionally, the international standard ISO 31000:2018 has been widely adopted as a reference framework for risk management systems in both public and private sectors, underscoring the importance of a comprehensive organizational culture that engages all areas in identifying and mitigating risks [34]. This integrated approach fosters collective awareness and shared responsibility in prevention; thus, the success of risk management depends not only on technical processes but, above all, on institutional engagement and the construction of a strong safety and sustainability culture.

Despite the persistence of fragmented and reactive approaches that hinder effective risk management, positive experiences are emerging in the public sector, such as the implementation of governance structures integrated with occupational health and safety management [35]. These initiatives strengthen the institutional role in prevention, demonstrating that institutional management extends beyond legal responsibility, it becomes a core element of organizational strategy. Furthermore, it contributes to promoting occupational health and ensuring efficient and safe public service, as investing in integrated and proactive management is crucial for overcoming historical challenges, improving workplace safety, and enhancing the quality of public services delivered to society.

##### IV.2 STRICT LIABILITY IN PUBLIC SERVICE

The strict liability of the State for damages caused to third parties is established in Article 37, §6 of the 1988 Federal Constitution, which provides that the direct and indirect public administration is responsible for damages caused by its agents, regardless of intent or fault [36]. In the context of occupational safety, this norm is particularly relevant when the State fails to guarantee safe conditions for its workers, whether permanent, temporary, or outsourced. This responsibility reinforces the duty of the public administration to adopt effective preventive measures and rigorously inspect workplaces. State omission in ensuring workers' physical integrity not only compromises safety but also exposes public administration to significant legal consequences, demanding greater diligence and commitment to prevention. The prevailing jurisprudence recognizes that State omission in its supervisory duties and in maintaining safe

working conditions constitutes strict liability, requiring public entities to compensate for damages, even when the activity is performed by a contracted company [37].

This liability is particularly relevant in outsourced service contracts, such as building maintenance, which often involve risks associated with working at heights. In such cases, it is essential for public managers to act diligently to ensure compliance with regulatory standards, especially NR-35, which governs safety in work at heights [38]. Rigorous supervision and effective management are indispensable to prevent accidents and avoid legal consequences for public administration. In practice, applying strict liability in the public sector faces several administrative barriers, such as difficulties in establishing causal links between public omission and the harmful event, as well as gaps in contract monitoring mechanisms. The lack of effective internal control systems and managerial accountability undermines the principle of efficiency, leaving the administration vulnerable to labor and social security litigation. These weaknesses hinder accident prevention and proper accountability, compromising worker protection and institutional credibility.

In this context, strengthening oversight tools and adopting transparent and rigorous practices are fundamental to ensuring the effectiveness of strict liability and promoting continuous improvement in public occupational safety management. Law No. 14,133/2021, which regulates public procurement, reinforces the administration's duty to monitor and supervise contract execution, including compliance with legal and labor requirements, thereby expanding the scope of strict liability [39]. This framework demands that public management adopt effective preventive systems, such as risk management plans and periodic technical audits, particularly in contracts involving high-risk activities. The challenge of strict liability in public service thus requires a critical reflection on the maturity of institutional management and the effectiveness of preventive mechanisms. Investment in training, procedure standardization, and the strengthening of a prevention- and life-centered organizational culture is indispensable for ensuring worker safety and upholding public administration's accountability.

### IV.3 SAFETY AS AN ORGANIZATIONAL DIMENSION

Occupational safety must be understood as a fundamental and structuring dimension of organizations, going beyond a merely corrective or legal perspective. Institutions that incorporate safety into their strategic frameworks build resilient environments capable of preventing accidents, protecting lives, and ensuring the efficient continuity of activities. To achieve this, four organizational pillars must be articulated: well-defined operational routines, continuous training, adequate support structures, and a consolidated prevention culture [40]. This integrated approach promotes engagement at all hierarchical levels and strengthens shared responsibility for safety, recognizing that investment in these pillars is crucial to transforming occupational safety into an organizational value—ensuring safer, healthier, and more productive workplaces.

Organizational routines establish clear standards for task execution, significantly contributing to risk minimization in the workplace. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), formal authorizations for critical activities, and practices such as lockout and tagging are concrete examples of mechanisms that embed safety into daily operations [41]. However, the effectiveness of such measures depends directly on systematic and continuous training, ensuring workers' understanding and commitment to established norms. Without ongoing education, these routines lose their preventive effectiveness, making the combination of well-structured procedures and continuous training essential for maintaining safe workplaces and strengthening the prevention culture.

Regular training is a fundamental component of accident prevention, as highlighted by ISO 45001:2018, which stresses the need to develop competencies through instruction programs and practical simulations so that workers can understand risks and act effectively in adverse situations [42]. The existence of dedicated organizational structures—such as Internal Commissions for Accident Prevention (CIPA), safety engineering departments, and risk management committees—allows for constant monitoring of working conditions, identification of irregularities, and implementation of improvements [43]. In complex public environments such as schools, hospitals, and universities, where high staff turnover and functional diversity prevail, investment in training and specialized structures becomes essential to ensure safety and operational efficiency.

The prevention culture must be promoted as a core institutional value, as organizations with consolidated safety cultures exhibit lower accident rates and greater worker engagement in preventive actions [44]. This requires firm leadership commitment, clear communication, and the active participation of employees in designing and implementing safety measures. Recognizing safety as a strategic organizational dimension strengthens institutional performance, protects individuals, and legitimizes public administration's role in promoting dignified and healthy workplaces. Therefore, investing in building and maintaining this culture is vital for ensuring the effectiveness of preventive actions and the quality of public services provided to society.

### IV.4 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

The absence of effective occupational safety policies in public organizations generates significant social and economic consequences. The social impact of workplace accidents and long-term disabilities extends beyond the individual, directly affecting families and communities. Prolonged incapacity for work is a multidimensional phenomenon that results in income loss, livelihood difficulties, and increased dependence on public or family support [45]. This situation generates social exclusion, emotional overload on caregivers, and weakens community bonds, heightening social vulnerability. Occupational accidents, particularly those related to work at heights, not only jeopardize workers' health and lives but also impose high costs on the State and society. These impacts manifest through extended absences, disability retirements, death pensions, productivity losses, and civil liability lawsuits.

From an economic standpoint, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that occupational accidents and diseases cause global losses equivalent to up to 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) annually [46]. In Brazil, the situation is alarming: in 2023, there were 499,955 recorded occupational accidents, resulting in 2,888 deaths, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Observatory. These events generated an estimated cost of R\$ 112 billion for the country, considering social security, healthcare, and legal expenses [47]. Such data underscore the significant impact of inadequate prevention, not only on human lives but also on the national

economy, demonstrating that investing in occupational safety is essential to reducing economic losses and preserving workers' health and lives.

In the context of public institutions, the costs arising from occupational accidents are amplified by their multiplier effect on public service delivery. The absence of technical staff, project stoppages, contract litigation, and the interruption of essential activities undermine administrative efficiency and the credibility of public management. Emphasize that the indirect costs of such accidents often exceed direct costs, affecting planning, schedules, and institutional reputation [48]. These impacts reveal the importance of effective prevention and risk management policies to ensure service continuity and maintain public trust, as investing in occupational safety also means investing in the quality and sustainability of public administration. Workplace insecurity deepens social inequalities and undermines labor dignity, especially affecting outsourced and precariously employed workers, who are more exposed to risks.

Studies conducted in public educational institutions indicate that 70% of height-related accidents involve outsourced labor [49]. Beyond human suffering, these accidents destabilize families, increase reliance on welfare benefits, and reinforce cycles of social exclusion. In this context, investment in occupational safety must be seen not as a cost but as a fundamental strategy for institutional development and social justice. Prevention not only generates public value but also reduces state expenditures, contributing to the creation of safer, more productive, and inclusive workplaces—thus strengthening society as a whole. Based on the discussion presented, Table 1 provides a synthesis of the four axes, highlighting their central concepts and corresponding recommended best practices.

Table 1: Summary of the Guiding Axes.

Thematic Axis	Core Concept	Best Practices
<b>The Role of Institutional Management in Risk Prevention</b>	The maturity of public management is decisive in preventing occupational risks within institutional environments.	- Implementation of proactive and integrated risk management policies.- Adoption of the Risk Management Program (RMP) and internal audits.- Alignment with ISO 31000:2018 guidelines.- Leadership engagement and promotion of a safety-oriented organizational culture.
<b>Objective Responsibility in Public Service</b>	The State is accountable for damages even in the absence of direct fault, requiring strict oversight and contractual control.	- Strengthening supervision of outsourced contracts.- Strict compliance with Regulatory Standard NR-35.- Implementation of internal control systems.- Application of Law No. 14.133/2021 (New Public Procurement Law).
<b>Safety as an Organizational Dimension</b>	Safety must be an institutional value, integrated into the routines, structure, and culture of organizations.	- Development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).- Continuous training based on ISO 45001:2018.- Establishment of dedicated structures such as Internal Accident Prevention Commissions (CIPA) and risk committees.- Encouragement of active employee participation.
<b>Social and Economic Impact</b>	Accidents result in human, social, and financial losses, undermining the delivery of public services.	- Investment in prevention as a cost-reduction strategy.- Continuous monitoring of accident data.- Public policies aimed at protecting vulnerable workers (outsourced and precarious).- Promotion of safety as a social and economic value.

Source: Authors (2026).

The analysis of the four thematic axes allows for an understanding of the complexity involved in managing occupational safety in work-at-height activities within the public sector, highlighting structural challenges and opportunities for the implementation of best practices. The first axis, "The Role of Institutional Management in Risk Prevention," demonstrates that the maturity of public management is essential for anticipating, mitigating, and monitoring occupational risks. Prevention must be treated as a strategic, rather than merely operational, function, grounded in integrated policies, the use of tools such as the Risk Management Program (RMP), internal audits, and alignment with ISO 31000 guidelines.

The second axis, "Objective Responsibility in Public Service," points out that the State is liable for damages resulting from accidents, even in the absence of direct fault, which requires rigorous oversight and effective control of contracts, particularly those involving outsourcing. Therefore, investing in preventive mechanisms and strengthening supervision is essential to protect workers and prevent legal sanctions. In the third axis, "Safety as an Organizational Dimension," the study reinforces the need to integrate occupational safety into institutional structures, considering it a fundamental organizational value. This entails defining clear operational routines, offering continuous training in accordance with ISO 45001, establishing safety committees, and promoting the active participation of public servants in building a culture of prevention.

The fourth axis, "Social and Economic Impact," broadens the discussion by demonstrating that accidents involving work at height generate not only human costs but also significant impacts on the delivery of public services and the State's budget. Worker absences, construction stoppages, litigation, and the social exclusion of injured workers reveal the extent to which prevention should be seen as both a strategy for valuing life and a means of ensuring administrative efficiency. Taken together, the four axes form an articulated management model that combines institutional responsibility, sustainability, and ethics in promoting safe working environments within the public sector.

## V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of this study was to responsibly and ethically identify the structural, organizational, and cultural barriers that hinder the effectiveness of preventive actions in the public sector. Although these obstacles are identifiable, overcoming them requires in-depth technical analysis, intersectoral dialogue, and strategic decisions that extend beyond the scope of a single study. The persistence of occupational safety in work at heights as one of the greatest challenges in public management is not new, but it reinforces the need for a qualified, critical, and sensitive perspective on the issue. The reflections presented here reaffirm that addressing these risks must be grounded in institutional commitment, collective responsibility, and the valuing of life—essential elements for building effective policies and safe, dignified, and sustainable work environments within public administration.

The role of institutional management in risk prevention highlights the importance of proactive and integrated policies that anticipate and mitigate hazards in the public sector. Organizations that institutionalize risk management strengthen governance, encourage managerial accountability, and promote evidence-based decision-making, while consolidating an organizational culture focused on safety. The challenge of objective liability in public service demonstrates that the State must compensate for damages caused to third parties even without direct fault. This increases the need for rigorous oversight and effective control of working conditions, especially in outsourced contracts, to prevent accidents and ensure worker safety. Such responsibility underscores the importance of diligent public management committed to the protection of life.

Safety as an organizational dimension emphasizes the importance of integrating safety into daily routines, continuous training, and the preventive culture of institutions. This approach fosters engagement across all hierarchical levels, strengthening shared responsibility for worker protection and ensuring safer, more productive, and resilient workplaces. It becomes an essential and structuring value for the effective functioning of organizations. The social and economic impact highlights the severe effects of work-related accidents on workers' lives, the financial costs for the public sector, and the interruption of essential public services. These consequences compromise administrative efficiency and increase the demand for resources, reinforcing the urgent need for investment in prevention to protect lives, reduce expenses, and ensure the quality of public services.

Together, the four guiding axes provide a solid foundation for developing comprehensive and sustainable practices in occupational safety management within the public sector. By integrating the strategic role of institutional management, the rigor of objective liability, the incorporation of safety as an organizational dimension, and the understanding of social and economic impacts, a structured and continuous commitment is established toward the protection of life and administrative efficiency. This commitment is essential to consolidate occupational safety as an institutional value, ensuring safer, more resilient, and more productive work environments. Moreover, it strengthens the credibility and legitimacy of public administration by aligning its practices with the principles of good governance, social responsibility, and sustainability—key foundations for the delivery of high-quality public services.

Promoting safety in activities at height goes beyond mere regulatory compliance; it represents the recognition of the worker's dignity as a fundamental and non-negotiable principle of public service. Therefore, this research does not represent a conclusion, but rather a starting point for continuous technical and academic deepening. It opens space for future investigations and interdisciplinary contributions that may strengthen occupational safety management. Thus, safety becomes an essential pillar of a more ethical, effective, and life-centered public administration. Investing in the valuing of life and the prevention of risks is an indispensable condition for building dignified workplaces aligned with the democratic and social principles that guide public management.

## VI. AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

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**Approval of the final text:** Magda da Silveira Elkfury, Tarcisio Dorn de Oliveira and Adriane Fabrício.

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