

# Health & Safety Arrangements For Management of Work at Height

## Management and Employee Guidance

### Introduction

Wirral Council recognises that accidents can arise from working at height. Falls from height can be a cause of injury and absence from work and may result in permanent disability and death. These arrangements provide managers and supervisors with guidance for managing all work at height. These arrangements were produced by following The Work at Height Regulations 2005 & INDG402: Safe use of ladders and stepladders.

### Definition of working at height

A place is 'at height' if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level, for example;

- Falls from ladders
- Falls from machinery or vehicles
- Falls from open edges
- Falls through roof lights
- Falls through fragile roofs
- Falls from scaffolding or similar access equipment

The most common factors identified in falls from height incidents involve failure to:

- recognise a problem;
- provide safe systems of work;
- ensure that safe systems of work are followed;
- provide adequate information, instruction, training or supervision;
- use appropriate equipment; and
- provide safe equipment.

### Management responsibilities

It is the responsibility of management to ensure:

- They follow the hierarchy for managing risks from work at height;
  - **AVOID** work at height where they can;
  - They use work equipment or other measures to **PREVENT** falls where they cannot avoid working at height; and
  - Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to **MINIMISE** the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

### Planning work at height

- Ensure that no work is done at height if it is safe and reasonably practicable to do it other than at height; When ever possible avoid working at height if it is reasonable practicable and safer to do so another way.
- Ensure that the work is properly planned, organised and appropriately supervised to be as safe as is reasonably practicable and ensure all work at height is only carried out by trained competent persons;
- Undertake risk assessments and implement the necessary controls for any work at height activities ([see appendix 1](#)).
- Plan for emergencies and rescue

- Choose the right work equipment and select collective measures to prevent falls (such as guardrails and working platforms) before other measures which may only mitigate the distance and consequences of a fall (such as nets or airbags) or which may only provide personal protection from a fall.
- Where a residual risk exists, provide personal protection such as a harness and suitable training on their use
- To ensure all work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety;
- To ensure the place where work at height is done is safe;
- Ensure equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected;
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled; and
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled.
- The area below the work being undertaken is secured to prevent injury to persons below

### **Management systems**

Managers in control of any tasks undertaken at work are responsible to ensure appropriate management systems are in place to ensure the following;

- Systems exist to ensure the regular maintenance and inspection of work equipment is undertaken as required within the manufactures / suppliers' instructions and appropriate records are maintained ([see appendix 2 for ladder checklist](#)).
- An inspection system and procedures are developed for staff to report any deficiencies with equipment and appropriate records are maintained
- Risk assessments for any work undertaken "at height" take account of the equipment provided for that work.
- Reports of all accidents/incidents involving work at height are investigated and reported as outlined within the Health and Safety Management Arrangements for Reporting & Investigating Accidents and Incidents
- All staff are provided with relevant information, instruction and training with regard to the risks identified and any safe systems of work / working procedures implemented to eliminate or reduce the risk of harm from work at height ([see appendix 3](#)).
- That any safety marking relating to the setting up, use and putting away of any equipment are clearly visible
- That adequate warnings are provided where necessary for the use of the equipment against specific hazards
- The use of work equipment is restricted only to persons specifically trained for the use of that equipment and that it is used according to the manufactures/suppliers instructions

### **Third party control**

It is the responsibility of Facility Managers or those Officers who arrange for any work being carried out by contractors on Council premises to ensure it is properly supervised. It is also the responsibility of department managers to challenge contractors if they are posing a risk to our employees, themselves or members of the public who may be affected ([See H&S Management Arrangements for the Control of Contractors](#)).

### **Employees Responsibilities**

Employees have a duty of care for their own and others safety and should;

- Attend and follow training for working at height
- Not use or operate any work equipment for which they have not been trained
- Carry out pre use checks on equipment that has been provided for work at height
- Report any defects to their supervisor or manager regarding any work equipment that has been provided for work at height
- Follow any safe working procedures / method statements or training that has been provided to carry out work at height safely

- Familiarise themselves with any significant findings of risk assessments and raise any concerns over control measures with their supervisor
- Not interfere with any measures put in place for the health and safety of themselves or others.

### **Links to other policies & arrangements**

These arrangements should be read in conjunction with;

- Council Health and Safety policy, which identifies the roles and responsibilities of all employees and managers
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for Risk Assessment
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for Reporting & Investigating Accidents and Incidents (including Industrial Injuries)
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for the Provision and Use of Work Equipment
- Health & Safety Management Arrangements for the Control of Contractors

## Appendix 1

**The following issues should be considered when planning any work at height;**

- What activity/task is being carried out
- How long the task will take
- Suitability of the equipment
- Failure of the equipment
- Falls from height (severity)
- Falling objects
- Weather conditions
- Manual Handling (carrying ladders + equipment)

**These controls can be implemented when carrying out any work at height;**

- Ensure the correct equipment is selected and used
- Short duration work only for ladders
- Secure ladder (top or bottom, preferably both)
- Use cherry pickers, scaffolding, fall arrest equipment etc
- Frequent inspections of equipment and implement a defect reporting systems
- Training of staff and supervisors
- 2 people to carry out the job (no lone working)
- Tool belts to be worn or equipment passed up to staff
- Inspection of ground before use
- Supervision of staff
- Consideration of weather conditions

**Employees should receive information, instruction and training for all work activities they perform. They should also be provided with information on the hazards of working at height such as;**

- Leaning ladders slipping as they are not secured
- Overstretching on a ladder or from access towers, cherry pickers etc
- Faulty ladder, scaffolding, access tower due to no formal inspection regime or defect reporting system in place
- Slipping or losing your footing due to poor footwear or stretching
- Stepladders wobbling due to missing feet or due to incorrect use
- Not positioning the ladder correctly
- Not checking ground conditions
- Working in inclement weather

**Ladder / Step ladder Inspection Checklist**

The frequency of the inspection regime would be dependant on the risk assessment and should be done in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Ladders that are part of a scaffold system still have to be inspected every seven days;

<b>Ladder ref/serial no:</b>		<b>Date of Inspection</b>			
<b>Inspected by:</b>		<b>Signature:</b>			
<b>Location at time of inspection:</b>		<b>Manager Signature:</b>			
<b>Item to be checked</b>	<b>Condition Pass/Fail</b>	<b>Action Required</b>	<b>Who by</b>	<b>When by</b>	
<b>GENERAL</b>					
<b>Suitable for work use</b>					
<b>Loose steps or rungs (consider loose if they can be moved by hand). Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Loose, damaged or corroded nails, screws, bolts or other metal parts. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Warped, bent or twisted stiles. Discard: do not attempt repair</b>					
<b>Cracked, split or broken stiles, braces, steps or rungs. Discard: do not attempt repair</b>					
<b>Slivers/splinters on stiles, rungs or steps. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Damaged, missing or worn non-slip feet. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Ladder painted (may hide defects). Remove from use: remove paint or discard</b>					
<b>STEPLADDERS</b>					
<b>Wobbly or unstable. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Loose or bent hinge spreaders. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Broken stop on hinge spreaders. Discard: do not attempt repair</b>					
<b>Loose hinges. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>EXTENSION LADDERS</b>					
<b>Loose, broken or missing extension locks. Discard: do not attempt repair</b>					
<b>Defective locks that do not seat properly when ladder is extended. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					
<b>Deterioration of rope. Remove from use: repair or discard</b>					



# Employees

## Guidance for Ladder Safety

Establish the ladder or stepladder is in a safe condition before using it.

**Know how to use a ladder safely.....You should only use ladders to get to or from a workplace, or for light work only for a short duration.**

### Keep the ladder level

The ladder should never tilt sideways. On sloping ground or stairs, use an approved levelling adjuster and secure the ladder at the top and bottom. Last resort is to have someone foot the ladder

### Use a safe ladder

Make sure the ladder has safety feet. Check the condition of the rungs regularly. Make sure the ladder is stored safely after each use

### Position the ladder

Make sure the ladder stands on firm ground and rests against a solid surface.  
Make sure both feet have good contact with the ground



**Never use makeshift ladders such as stack of boxes or furniture. Always use a proper stepladder to reach high places**

**Follow the 4:1 rule. The base of the ladder should always be one metre from the wall for every four metres in height. Don't step on the top two rungs – get a longer ladder if necessary**

### Secure the ladder

Use lashings or straps to secure the ladder at the top to prevent it from slipping sideways. Secure it at the bottom if there is a risk of it moving away from the building or structure

### Keep your hands free

You need both hands to climb. Carry light tools in a shoulder bag or holster. Pull up bulky or heavy items after you reach the top

### Face forward

Don't twist or turn on the ladder. Step up or down the ladder one rung at a time. Don't use the ladder if someone else is on it.

### Don't overreach

If your waist isn't within the stiles (sides) of the ladder, you're leaning too far. Keep your navel inside the rungs of the stiles of the ladder,

### Ladders

Use ladders and footstools for reaching high places, not a chair or other furniture  
Don't try to reach too far, move the ladder or footstool instead.

**All ladders should be inspected prior to use and records should be retained of all inspections. If a ladder is defective then it MUST be taken out of use and disposed of in the correct manner.**

**A third of all reported fall-from-height incidents involve ladders and stepladders – on average this accounts for 14 deaths and 1200 major injuries to workers each year.**

# Managers Guidance for Ladder Safety

Establish the ladder or stepladder is in a safe condition before using it.

All work at height should be properly planned. This means a careful assessment of what you need to do and how you are going to do it.

Postpone any work at height if the weather conditions endanger health & safety.

## **Risk Assessment**

Carrying out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment will help you identify what precautions are needed.

A risk assessment is just thinking about what task you are going to do, how you are going to do it and what safe systems of work you are going to follow.

You should consider the following;

***What activity is being done?***

***How long will it take?***

***Suitability of equipment***

***Severity of a fall from height***

***Falling objects***

***Weather conditions***

***Have your staff received training on ladder safety***



## **DO's**

Try to avoid working at height where possible

Try to prevent a fall by using access towers/scaffolding etc

Try to minimise the consequence of any potential fall by using fall arrest equipment, safety nets etc

## **When can ladders be used?**

Ladders can be used if after assessing the risks the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and short duration.

Short duration is taken to be between 15 and 30 minutes depending upon the task.

Ladders can also be used for low risk work where there are features on the site that mean a ladder must be used.

**The Work at Height Regulations (2005) came into force in April 2005. Employers have a duty to assess the risks, plan and supervise all workers who work at height.**

***58 people died from a fall from height at work in 2007/08. Falls from height remain the most common kind of accident causing fatal injuries.***

***Falls from ladders resulted in 16 deaths and 1146 major injuries in 2007/08, amounting to over a quarter of all major injuries as a result of a fall from height.***

## **DONT's**

Ask an employee to carry out work at height unless they have received suitable training.

Assume all work at height can only be done on ladders or step ladders.

Ask an employee to use a ladder or step ladder which has not been inspected or is not fit for purpose.

Rely on personal protective measures such as harnesses, try and ensure collective measures are in place.

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