

**WORKING AT HEIGHT**



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| **Policy Schedule** | | |
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1. **Introduction** 
   1. The aim of this document is to identify the principal risks to the health and safety of employees, contractors and the members of the public arising from working at height and specify the general precautions that must be taken to eliminate or reduce these risks.
   2. For the purposes of this guide the term ‘working at height’ refers to activity (above or below ground) that requires some form of access equipment to get to/from the work area e.g. a ladder or scaffolding or where the task is at height e.g. roof work.
   3. Any work activities that require working at height will require specific risk assessments and documented methods of work.
   4. There are specific legal requirements, duties and responsibilities contained within the Work at Height Regulations 2005, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
2. **Training**
   1. All staff must be provided with sufficient instruction, training (Level 1 minimum) or supervision to be able to carry out their work safely.
   2. Managers, Supervisors and Clerks of Works should have sufficient experience or training to be able to identify the hazards involved in the work activity and to be able to put in place measures to reduce the chances of injury.
   3. Any employee who is required to carry out risk assessments for activities involving working at height should as a minimum have attended the Level 2 training modules.
   4. Any employee who is required to use work equipment including ladders, step ladders, mobile towers, scaffolding etc must be specifically trained in its safe installation/use. Training records must be kept and maintained.
   5. Example toolbox talks and an attendance record are provided in **Appendix 1, 2 and 5**:

- **Appendix 1 INFO 025A Working at Height Toolbox Talk Content**

- **Appendix 2 INFO 025B Ladder Toolbox Talk Content**

- **Appendix 5 FORM 032A Toolbox Talk attendance record**

1. **Work Equipment**
   1. The term ‘work equipment’ applies to any ladder, fixed or mobile scaffolding, powered access equipment, ropes, pulleys, harnesses and fall-arrest systems.
   2. All work equipment must be suitable for the purpose and maintained and repaired or renewed when damaged.
   3. Where the safety of work equipment is dependent on proactive inspection and maintenance, a programme should be established for a competent person to carry out the necessary works (e.g. ladder and lifting equipment inspections).
   4. Maintenance and inspection records must be kept. Ladder inspection forms are available in **Appendix 3 FORM 025C Ladder Inspection Form and Appendix 4 FORM 025B Portable Ladders and Stepladder Inspection Checklist.**
2. **RISK ASSESSMENT FOR WORKING AT HEIGHT**

**\* Complete form to make specific to your work location and activities.**

| **Directorate:** | | | | | | **Service/Location:** | | | | **Task:** | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Hazard** | | **To Whom** | **Before Controls** | | | **Existing Controls**  **(Add, delete and expand controls as appropriate)** | **After Controls** | | | **Action Required** | **By Whom and When** |
| Activity/equipment/ process etc. | **Harm/ possible injury** | **Likelihood (L)** | **Severity (S)** | **Risk Rating (LxS)** | **Likelihood (L)** | **Severity (S)** | **Risk Rating (L\*S)** |
| **Work Equipment:**  Ladders | Death & Serious Injury, from collapse, falls and falling objects. | User and others | 4 | 5 | 20 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Maintenance & inspection (detail); * Securing ladder; * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements (list); * Barriers; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fixed scaffolding | Death & Serious Injury, from collapse, falls and falling objects. | Users and others | 3 | 5 | 15 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Maintenance & inspection (detail); * Toe-boards; * Netting; * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements (list); * Barriers; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Mobile scaffolding | Death & Serious Injury, from collapse, falls and falling objects. | Users and others | 3 | 5 | 15 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Maintenance & inspection (Detail); * Out-riggers; * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements (List): * Barriers; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Work Equipment  Powered access equipment (e.g. scissor lifts) | Death & Serious Injury, from collapse, falls and falling objects. | Users and others | 3 | 5 | 15 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Maintenance & inspection (detail); * Out-riggers; * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements; * Barriers; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Ropes, pulleys, harnesses and fall-arrest systems | Death & Serious Injury, from failure and falls. | Users | 3 | 5 | 15 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Maintenance & inspection (detail); * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements; * Barriers; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |
| Roof work etc | Death & Serious Injury from falls and falling objects. | Worker and others | 5 | 3 | 15 | * Training, instruction & supervision; * Identify fragile surfaces, * Maintenance & inspection (list); * Barriers & edge protection; * Fall–arrest systems; * Harnesses; * Separation of work area and pedestrians; * Method statements; * Signage. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Name of Assessor: Date:**

**Position:**  **Review Date:**

**Managers Signature: Date:**

1. **Key Health and Safety Points** 
   1. Managers, Supervisors and Clerks of Works must ensure that:

* Risk assessments have been carried out for the activity and location.
* Decisions on work methods must be fully researched and follow existing best practice.
* Permits to Work are prepared where necessary.
* Suitable levels of supervision are in place.
* All employees or contractors work in accordance with the adopted safe working practices and procedures that have been identified in the risk assessment.
* Employees are provided with sufficient levels of information, instruction, training and/or supervision.
* All accidents, incidents, near misses and problems are reported and recorded as soon as possible.
* All work equipment and personal protective equipment is maintained to a safe condition.
* Employees wear all Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided for the activity.
* Members of the public are kept well clear of any hazardous operation/area.
* All hazards are eliminated or minimised to reduce the risk of injury.
* All necessary documentation is maintained.
  1. Employees must ensure that:
* They adhere to the adopted safe working practices and procedures.
* All accidents, incidents or near misses are reported to their manager or supervisor as soon as possible.
* They immediately bring to the attention of their manager or supervisor any uncontrolled hazards.
* They use work equipment in the correct manner and report any defects to their manager or supervisor.
* They wear any Personal Protective Equipment that has been provided for their safety and report any defects to their manager or supervisor
* They do not endanger themselves or others.

1. **Hierarchy of Controls**

### AVOID WORKING AT HEIGHT

**CHOOSE WORK EQUIPMENT THAT PREVENTS FALLS**

**COLLECTIVE** (Equipment that protects everyone during task)

* Guardrails
* Scaffolding
* Mobile Towers
* Multi-user Mobile Elevated Work Platforms

**PERSONAL** (Equipment for individuals)

* Personal Fall prevention
* Work Restraint
* Pulpits

CHOOSE WORK EQUIPMENT THAT MINIMISES HEIGHT & CONSEQUENCES OF FALL

**COLLECTIVE** (Equipment that protects everyone during task)

* Nets at high level
* Nets at lower level (> 2m below surface)
* Soft landing systems (close under surface)

**PERSONAL** (Equipment for individuals)

* Personal Fall Protection Systems
* Fall arrest with emergency recovery procedures

CHOOSE WORK EQUIPMENT THAT MINIMISES CONSEQUENCES OF FALL

**PERSONAL** (Equipment for individuals)

* Injury reduction systems (e.g. inflating jackets)

**COLLECTIVE** (Equipment that protects everyone during task)

* Soft Landing systems or
* Nets at low level (<or=6m below working surface)

**Work at Height flowchart**

* Ladders
* Step ladders
* Trestles
* Low-Level platforms designed without guarding

CHOOSE WORK EQUIPMENT THAT DOES NEITHER

### ASSESS THE RISKS TO HELP DECIDE HOW TO WORK SAFELY

IS IT REASONABLY PRACTICABLE TO SAFELY CARRY OUT THE TASK WITHOUT WORKING AT HEIGHT?

YES

NO

IS THERE A RISK OF A PERSON OR OBJECTS FALLING AND CAUSING INJURY?

NO

YES

PERFORM THE TASK IN A SAFE MANNER

PERFORM THE TASK IN A SAFE MANNER FROM THE GROUND

NOTE

* ONLY USE LADDERS FOR ACCESS / EGRESS; OR, FOLLOWING A RISK ASSESSMENT, IF THE JOB IS LOW RISK & SHORT DURATION; OR IF DUE TO THE UNALTERABLE FEATURES OF THE SITE THERE ARE NO ALTERNATIVES.
* WORK MUST BE ACCESSIBLE WITHOUT STRETCHING.
* LADDERS MUST **NOT** BE USED FOR A RISE OF MORE THAN 9m UNLESS THERE ARE REST PLATFORMS AT SUITABLE INTERVALS.
* WHEREVER POSSIBLE LADDERS MUST BE TIED OFF OR HAVE ADDITIONAL STABILITY AIDS FITTED
* PLAN THE JOB.
* CARRY OUT A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR THE JOB - *REFER TO THE GENERIC RISK ASSESSMENT (ABOVE).*
* TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE WEATHER CONDITIONS AND POSSIBLE EMERGENCIES.
* ENSURE THAT STAFF ARE COMPETENT/TRAINED.
* PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO REMOVE/REDUCE THE RISK OF A FALL OR FALLING OBJECTS BY USING THE MOST SUITABLE WORK EQUIPMENT FOR THE TASK, ENVIRONMENT AND CONDITIONS.
* IDENTIFY ANY FRAGILE SURFACES (E.G. ROOF LIGHTS OR CORRUGATED CEMENT PRODUCTS) AND ORGANISE THE WORK TO MINIMISE RISK.
* ENSURE THAT ALL EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN MAINTAINED & INSPECTED AND IS ONLY INSTALLED/USED BY TRAINED STAFF (OR CONTRACTORS).
* WHERE THERE IS STILL A RISK OF FALLING, USE SUITABLE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT – MOVEMENT RESTRICTORS OR FALL ARREST SYSTEMS. (WHERE FALL ARREST IS CHOSEN, ENSURE THAT EMERGENCY RECOVERY PROCEDURES ARE IN PLACE.

1. **Additional Information**

Reference Documentation

* Health & Safety Executive website: [Work at Height](http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm) & [Construction](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/index.htm)
* [The Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1996/1592/contents/made)
* [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/puwer.htm)
* [HSG150 Health and Safety in Construction](https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg150.htm)

1. **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** INFO 025A Work at Height Toolbox Talk

**Work at Height Toolbox Talk**

**What is ‘Work at Height?**’- A place of work where a person is likely to be injured falling from it, even if it if it is above or below ground level. **Any** work at height has the potential for injury.

As an employer in control of the work we must do all that is reasonably practicable in terms of time trouble and cost to prevent anyone falling from height. We must:

* Plan and organise the work.
* Provide suitable equipment for work at height and make sure it is inspected, maintained and safe to use (i.e. scaffolding with handrails, toe-boards etc).
* Protect everyone on site from falling objects.
* Take the weather into account and provide adequate lighting.
* Provide information, training and instruction to all workers.
* Check all scaffolding and access equipment to ensure that is safe to use.
* Clearly identify and separate scaffolding and access equipment which has not been checked or signed-off as being safe to use.

Employees must:

* Report safety hazards to their Line Manager.
* Properly use any equipment supplied for their use, following the instructions, advice and training given.
* Follow the correct working procedure.
* Short-cuts or by-passing of any safety equipment will not be tolerated and disciplinary action may be taken if this is found to be the case.
* Inform their Line Manager if they are unsure about any control measures or they think there is a safer way of working.

In practice this means:

* Ladders must be inspected and checked for suitability prior to use.
* Access scaffolds must be built and regularly inspected by competent people either internally or by an external competent contractor.
* Access scaffolds must be used properly. Do not move handrails or toe-boards, do not stand on handrails or remove sections to get access, do not leave loading bay gates open.
* Access ladders must reach at least 1m above landing platforms and be tied and footed before they are used.
* Tower scaffolds must be erected and inspected by a competent person.
* Tower scaffold must not be moved with people on them.
* Tower scaffolds must be locked and prevented from moving when being used.
* Tower scaffold wheels must not be unlocked when the tower is in use. The only time they should be unlocked is when the tower is being moved.
* Outriggers must not be removed.
* Mobile work platforms must only be used on sound level surfaces by trained people.
* Mobile work platforms must not be overloaded.
* Harnesses must only be used as instructed and as an absolute last resort. Never clip a harness to a tower scaffold.

Even a very short fall on to steel starter bars, pipework, machinery, or hard surfaces can result in serious injury and even death. The risk of falls from height must be avoided by the implementation of safe working procedures, hand railing, toe-boards and secure fencing.

Falls **MUST** be prevented.

**Appendix 2** INFO 025B Ladder Toolbox Talk

**Ladder Toolbox Talk**

People fall from ladders for various reasons, including:

* Foot slipped on rung
* Slipping while carrying tools or materials
* Slipping while climbing the ladder in wet weather
* Missed footing
* Obstruction part way or materials
* Lost grip
* Struck by falling material
* Overbalanced
* Jumping off or onto ladders
* Over-reaching
* Lack of understanding/training

You are responsible for reducing the risk of falling by:

* Using a safer method to access to the task ideally a working platform.
* Only ever use a ladder for a simple short term task (no longer than 30 minutes).
* Make sure that the ladder cannot slip.
* For a leaning ladder, you should secure it (e.g. by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point, i.e. do not rest a ladder against weak upper surfaces.
* Keep rungs of the ladder and footwear clean.
* Use both hands when climbing or descending.
* Where possible Ladders should be staked to prevent slipping outwards and sideways.
* Set ladders at the correct angle, 300mm out to every 1,200mm up. (1 out to 4 up)
* Always check your ladders before and after use, and report all defects immediately.
* Never use a make-shift ladder from other materials.
* Do not use ladders with cracked or broken rungs or other defects. If your ladders are damaged report this to your line manager immediately.
* Do not over-reach from a ladder - always move it.
* Do not stand a ladder on a drum or box, or other unsteady base.
* Never overload a ladder.
* Ensure the ladder is supported on a firm and level base.
* Do not use ladders that are too short. Ladder access to landings must extend 1.1m above landing area.
* Do not obstruct the access onto or off a ladder by leaving materials or rubbish at the top or bottom.
* Do not paint a ladder, as this hides any defects.

A damaged ladder should not be used. Take it to a manager who will arrange for it to be taken out of use and either destroyed or returned to our supplier.

## Step Ladders

Before use, you should always check the conditions of:

* Treads – ensure they are firmly fixed and not damaged
* Stiles – ensure there are no cracks, splits or visible damage
* Hinge arrangement to ensure they are sturdy and without damage
* Restraining rope or clasp between legs – ensure they are present, working and the locks are in place

Damaged step ladders should not be used. Take them to a manager who will arrange for them to be taken out of use and either destroyed or returned to our supplier.

## Working from Step Ladders

* They must only be used from a firm level base.
* Work facing on to the task - not facing to the side of the task.
* Always consider the work that requires being undertaken. Then ask; could the work be completed from a mobile platform or other safer means of access instead?
* Work should not be completed from further than two thirds up step ladders (a hand hold is required) Boards must not be slung between treads on steps to provide working platform. The treads are not designed for this type of loading. A one board wide platform is not a safe working platform.

Ladders and step ladders must only be used for very short duration and for very simple tasks. They should not be used where other forms of working platform (mobile elevated work platforms, scaffold towers etc.) can be used.

**Appendix 3** FORM 025A Ladder Inspection Form

**Ladder Inspection Form**

This checklist confirms that the operative has completed his daily checks and that the ladder or stepladder is in good order. Any defective piece of equipment must be taken out of use immediately and reported to your line manager. Arrangements must be made for the defective equipment to be repaired or replaced.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date/Time** | **Ladder Type** | **ID No / Mark** | **Storage location of ladder/s** | **Are the ladders / step ladders safe to use**  **Yes or No?** | **If no, please detail the faults identified** | **Specify whom the faults were reported to** | **Have the ladders / step ladders been taken out of use Yes / No** | **Date repairs**  **completed or ladders destroyed** | **Name and job title** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**Appendix 4:** FORM 025B Portable Ladders and Stepladder Inspection Checklist

Inspection Checklist

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location |  |
| Description Of Item |  |
| Ladder ID Number |  |
| Date Of Inspection |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Inspection Carried Out By? | |
| Name In Capitals |  |
| Signature |  |
| Position |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Yes / No** | | **Defect(s)** | **Action Required Immediate / Follow Up** | | **Follow Up Action Carried Out By / Date** | |
| **Construction** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Compliant With British Standards. Any ladder used in a work environment should conform with BS/EN131 Professional standard |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Stiles**  Are the stiles:   * Free from being bowed or twisted * Free from splinters, holes, tears, splits * Froeefrom corrosion, rot, mould, fungus * Free from paint, chemicals or other contamination |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Rungs or Treads**  Are the rungs/treads:   * All present * Straight & tight (cannot be moved by hand) * Free from over wear with no cracks or dents * Free from corrosion, rot, mould, fungus |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Feet and End Caps**  Are the feet and end caps:   * All presesnt * Secure with no loose or missing fixings * Free from over wear with tread in good condition * Free from splits, cracks or other damage * Free from paint, chemicals or other contamination |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Brackets, Hooks & Catches**  For leaning ladders only, are they:   * All there * Working smoothly with no missing or damaged wear parts * Free from corrosion, rot, mould, fungus * Free from paint, chemical or other contamination * Are supporting stiles straight (not twisted out) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Ladder Fittings**  **Ladder Hinges**   * Free from movement * Free from damage   **Tie Rods & Struts**   * are all there * securely fixed * free from damage   **Rivets & Welding**   * all intact and secure   **Ropes & Pulleys**   * working smoothly with no missing parts * free from damage * ropes free from fraying, cuts or wear   **Locking Bars**  **(stepladders only)**   * locks correctly, or anti-spray cords are intact & secured   **Hand / Guard Rails**   * intact & securely fixed   **Access Gates**   * Intact & securely fixed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| On a step ladder is the platform distorted? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Storage** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Correct Support? ( should not be hung by the rungs) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Protected To Prevent Damage? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Secured To Stop ANY Unauthorised Use? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

NOTE: Equipment which fails must be taken out of use immediately and prominently labelled until repaired or disposed of.

**Appendix 5:** FORM 032A Toolbox Talk attendance record

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **<Insert Title> Toolbox Talk Record** | | | |
| **Delivered by:** |  | **Date:** |  |
| **Attendee Name** | **Job title/Service Area** | | **Signature** |
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| Issue | Date | Changed by | Updates |
| 3 | 3/06/2021 | G.Watson | Added FORM 025B Portable Ladders and Stepladder Inspection Checklist |