

SAFE WORKING PROCEDURE

Working Safely at Height

CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY | VERSION 4.00 | December 2023

STATEMENT:

In order to comply with legislation and fulfil its statutory responsibility, the Council must make sure that:

- All working at height tasks and activities have a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place.
- Working at height risk assessments consider who might be harmed including third parties.
- Controls are in place to prevent falls or mitigate the effect of falling from height.
- Controls are in place to prevent falling objects or people from being harmed from falling objects.

SCOPE:

This Safe Working Procedure (SWP) applies to:

- All managers including head teachers referred to as managers herein.
- All employees of Southampton City Council.
- All contractors of Southampton City Council.

Version Control

This Safe Working Procedure is issued and managed by Corporate Health and Safety Service.

Version Number	Date	Amendments
Version 1.00	Oct 2008	
Version 2.00	Aug 2010	
Version 2.01	Dec 2015	New Format
Version 2.02	Dec 2017	Updated to include revised BS EN 31 and BS 8620.
Version 3.0	Apr 2020	General review
Version 3.01	Mar 2021	Updated to include the new standard for tower scaffolds – BS EN 1004-1 2020
Version 4.00	Dec 2023	Periodic Review
Review Conducted		Next Review Date
		Mar 2012
	Dec 2015	Dec 2017
	Dec 2017	
	Apr 2020	Apr 2022
	Mar 2021	Apr 2023
	Dec 2023	Dec 2025

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[Appendix 1](#): Working at Height Risk Flowchart

Forms*

- Working at Height Checklist
- Tower Scaffold Site Inspection Checklist
- Record of Ladder Inspections

*All forms can be found in forms library on [H&S Intranet](#) or [Health and Safety for Schools](#) webpage.

1. Responsibilities

Senior Managers/Head teachers are responsible for ensuring:

- 1.1. Ensure managers carry out their roles and responsibilities as laid out in this Safe Working Procedure.

Managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the SWP and must:

- 1.2. Ensure all working at height is planned and organised.
- 1.3. Ensure a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is in place for working at height operations.
- 1.4. Ensure weather conditions are taken into account.
- 1.5. Ensure appropriate controls are in place to prevent falls and falling objects from height in line with the hierarchy of controls specified by the regulations and this procedure.
- 1.6. Ensure the risks of falling through fragile surfaces are properly controlled.
- 1.7. Ensure equipment used is appropriately inspected and maintained.
- 1.8. Ensure employees are competent for working at height operations and to use the equipment provided and are supplied with appropriate information/instructions.
- 1.9. Ensure effective rescue plans and equipment is in place for the recovery of persons who have fallen and are in suspension.
- 1.10. Ensure companies providing access scaffolds are working to the current minimum standards recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This would normally mean National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) registered or an equivalent recognised national standard.
- 1.11. Ensure employees erecting tower scaffolds are Prefabricated Access Suppliers and Manufacturers Association Ltd (PASMA) trained.

Employees must:

- 1.12. Follow procedures and use equipment provided for their health and safety in line with this procedure.

2. Procedures

- 2.1. Definition of Working at Height - a place is 'at height' where a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.
- 2.2. Accidents caused by falls can lead to serious injury or even death. The Work at Height Regulations are based on a hierarchy which requires that all work at height must be avoided whenever possible. Responsible persons must:
 - 2.2.1. Avoid work at height where they can.
 - 2.2.2. Use equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height.
 - 2.2.3. Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequence of a fall should one occur.

- 2.3. Falls or falling objects even from heights at relatively low levels present an unacceptable risk to people. The overriding principle for employers is that they must do "all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling". Consequently, the procedures and guidance below must be followed prior to undertaking any work at height:
- 2.3.1. Assess the risks of working at height using the Council's SWP Risk Assessment and the Working at Height Checklist and guidance set out in the Working at Height Microsite on [H&S Intranet](#) and [H&S for Schools](#) webpage.
 - 2.3.2. Consider the specific risks posed by working at height as part of your overall health and safety risk assessment.
 - 2.3.3. Consider why the work is being carried out.
 - 2.3.4. Consider if working at height can be avoided using alternative working methods/equipment.
 - 2.3.5. Consider what the risks of all falls are and what the specific precautions are required to reduce those risks.
 - 2.3.6. See [Appendix 1](#) working at height risk flowchart for further guidance to complete risk assessment. Your risk assessment must ensure:
 - 2.3.6.1. The environment for working at height is safe.
 - 2.3.6.2. Procedures in case of emergency are planned for.
 - 2.3.6.3. Existing structures are stable.
 - 2.3.6.4. Platforms will support the weight of workers and the equipment or materials they may need.
 - 2.3.6.5. Platforms are footed on firm ground or on a stable structure to prevent them from moving. For example, scaffolding should generally be tied to an existing structure.
 - 2.3.6.6. Guard rails, boards or other barriers such as toe boards are erected where people could fall through holes or openings in a platform floor.
 - 2.3.7. If managers/headteachers have employees that don't work at height very often or are unsure about which type of access equipment to use, it's important that you assess the risks and select the right equipment for the job.
- 2.4. There are many types of access equipment that can and should be used to manage working at height operations, including:
- 2.4.1. General scaffolds – BS EN 12811-1:2003;
 - 2.4.2. Tower scaffolds – BS EN1004 -1: 2020;
Note: Tower scaffolds that meet the old BS EN 1004: 2004 as long as they are serviceable and regularly inspected and are not damaged can still be used;
 - 2.4.3. Tower scaffolds that are outside the scope of BS EN 1004 – 1: 2020 or BS EN 1004: 2004 must meet BS1139 – 6: 2014
 - 2.4.4. Suspended access equipment – BS EN 1808:2015;
 - 2.4.5. Mobile elevating work platforms (MEWP) BS 8460:2017;
 - 2.4.6. Low level work platform with one working platform with side protection for use by one person with a maximum working platform height no greater than 2.5 m. Specification - BS 8620:2016
 - 2.4.6 Ladders /Stepladders – EN 131 Professional ladders.

Note: BS 1129: 1990, BS 2037: 1994 ladders can still be used as long as they have been subject to regular inspection and still fit for purpose. No domestic or EN 131 Non-professional ladders to be used.

2.4.7 Fall restraint systems – BS EN 361 for a full body harness;

2.4.8 Fall arrest systems – BS EN 363:2018 and BS EN 365:2004;

The type of equipment depends on:

- The space, nature and duration of the work;
- The number of users;
- The risks of erecting the structure;

- 2.5. You will need to ensure that all access equipment is well maintained and checked regularly. All equipment should be removed from the platform at the end of the working day, and any power supplies should be switched off and isolated.
- 2.6. Managers must ensure companies providing access scaffolds are working to the current minimum standards recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This would normally mean National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC) registered or an equivalent recognised national standard.
- 2.7. Employees erecting tower scaffolds need to be Prefabricated Access Suppliers and Manufacturers Association Ltd (PASMA) trained.
- 2.8. Reduce the risks of objects falling from height onto somebody or something below, i.e. any hand-held equipment such as drills, saws, buckets can be dropped and knocked over the edge of a platform or walkway. Materials such as nails, pieces of wood and debris can also represent a significant hazard. The following advice should be considered to prevent objects falling:
- 2.8.1. Platforms should be constructed so that materials or objects can't fall and cause injury to anyone or anything below. Close boarded platforms are usually sufficient.
- 2.8.2. For work over public areas, a double-boarded platform with a polythene sheet in between the boards prevents small items such as nails and bolts from falling.
- 2.8.3. Toe boards also prevent items from being kicked off the edge of platforms.
- 2.8.4. Providing a covered walkway is another way to protect people below.
- 2.8.5. If you're using a cradle, harness or mobile elevated working platform (MEWP), mesh or netting can be used underneath the equipment to prevent anything falling and causing injury or damage.
- 2.8.6. Covered chutes are an effective and quick method of removing debris from work areas, and much safer than throwing (bombing) over the side of a platform into a skip below.
- 2.8.7. Tools such as drills and trowels can be attached to safety lines - if they're accidentally dropped, the line prevents them falling below the work area.
- 2.8.8. Remember that bad weather can cause difficulties for outdoor work, with wind blowing equipment off platforms. If the weather is particularly severe, you may have to postpone work to prevent putting people at risk.

- 2.9. All access equipment and scaffolds should be inspected and tested on a regular basis and records kept of any such inspections and tests e.g. ladder registers. Inspections should be carried out:
 - 2.9.1. By a competent person;
 - 2.9.2. Daily before the access equipment is used;
 - 2.9.3. On the equipment after it is assembled or installed;
 - 2.9.4. As often as is necessary to ensure safety, and in particular to make sure that any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time;
 - 2.9.5. Before use if coming from another business or organisation and before any equipment leaves the council It must be accompanied by a record of the last inspection;
 - 2.9.6. Inspections should be carried out before use, not more than seven days before, when any platform from which a person could fall is used construction work, or for access to or from construction work;
 - 2.9.7. Where it is a mobile platform, inspection at the site is sufficient without re-inspection every time it is moved;
- 2.10. Further guidance on working at height can be found in the Working at Height Microsite, including guidance on the use of equipment used for working at height.

3. Safe Working Procedures Relevant to This Document

- 3.1. [Managing Health and Safety](#)
- 3.2. [Control of Contractors- Construction and building maintenance](#)
- 3.3. [Control of Contractors - Service Providers and suppliers of goods](#)
- 3.4. [Risk Assessment](#)
- 3.5. [Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- 3.6. [Work Equipment](#)
- 3.7. [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment](#)
- 3.8. [Accident/Incident Reporting and Investigation](#)
- 3.9. [Safety Representatives](#)

Note: Other safe working procedures may apply and the assessor should consult the SWPs, which are available on [H&S Intranet](#) or [Health and Safety for Schools](#) webpage.

3.0 Main Legislation Relevant to This Document

- 4.1. [Working at Height Regulations](#)
- 4.2. [Working at Height Amendment Regulations](#)
- 4.3. [Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2015](#)
- 4.4. [Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations](#)
- 4.5. [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations](#)
- 4.6. [Workplace \(Health, Safety and Welfare\) Regulations](#)
- 4.7. [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations](#)
- 4.8. [Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations](#)
- 4.9. [Manual Handling Operations Regulations](#)
- 4.10. [Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013](#)

4.0 Contact Address's and Guidance Links

- 5.1. Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
www.hse.gov.uk
 - 5.1.1. [HSE Working at Height](#)
 - 5.1.2. INDG401 – [A Brief Guide to the Work at Height Regulations \(as amended\)](#)
 - 5.1.3. LA455 – [Guide on the Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders](#)
 - 5.1.4. HSG150 – [Health and Safety in Construction](#)
 - 5.1.5. HSG33 - [Health and Safety in Roof Work](#)
 - 5.1.6. [Tower Scaffolds](#)
- 5.2. Work at Height Safety Association
<http://www.wahsa.org.uk/>
- 5.3. The National Access and Scaffolding Confederation (NASC)
<http://www.nasc.org.uk/>
- 5.4. Prefabricated Access Suppliers' and Manufacturers' Association Limited (PASMA)
(Tower scaffolds)
<http://www.pasma.co.uk/>
- 5.5. International Powered Access Federation (IPAF)
<http://www.ipaf.org/>
- 5.6. Corporate Health and Safety Service
[Health and Safety Intranet](#)
[Health and Safety for Schools](#)

Working at Height Risk Flowchart

