



Working at Height Policy and Procedure

NAME OF SCHOOL	Stanmore Primary School
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NAME OF RESPONSIBLE MANAGER/HEADTEACHER	Mrs Sharon Taylor

Purpose

Falls from height are among the most common causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries.

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is committed to reducing and controlling the risks to its staff and others who may be affected by work at height. This procedure sets out a structured way to determine appropriate systems, equipment and other control measures that can be used to avoid or reduce these risks. The aim is to secure compliance with the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Scope

The standards contained within this procedure will apply to all HCC work at height where a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. It also applies to preventing injury from the fall of any material or object.

This procedure replaces all previous corporate policies and procedures relating to work at height.

Terminology

Work at Height – work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury, including falls into excavations or holes in the ground, and those below ground.

Access equipment – equipment that is used to provide safe access for work at height.

Fragile surface – any surface that is likely to fail should a reasonably foreseeable loading be applied, including all roof lights and fibre cement sheets.

Working platform – any platform used as a place of work or for access or egress, including any scaffold, MEWP, stairway, etc which is used for those purpose.

Competence – the necessary skills, experience, training, aptitude and knowledge to undertake the task in hand. The limitations of that competence should also always be considered.

Statutory Thorough Examination – detailed inspection by in independent, competent person, usually through an insurance company.

Associated records

Appropriate records will be informed by local risk assessment and guidance. Such records would include ladder registers and inspection logs; records of statutory through examinations of lifting equipment; scaffold registers, etc.

This is not an exhaustive list.

These records must be held in accordance with Hampshire County Council retention policy.

Guides

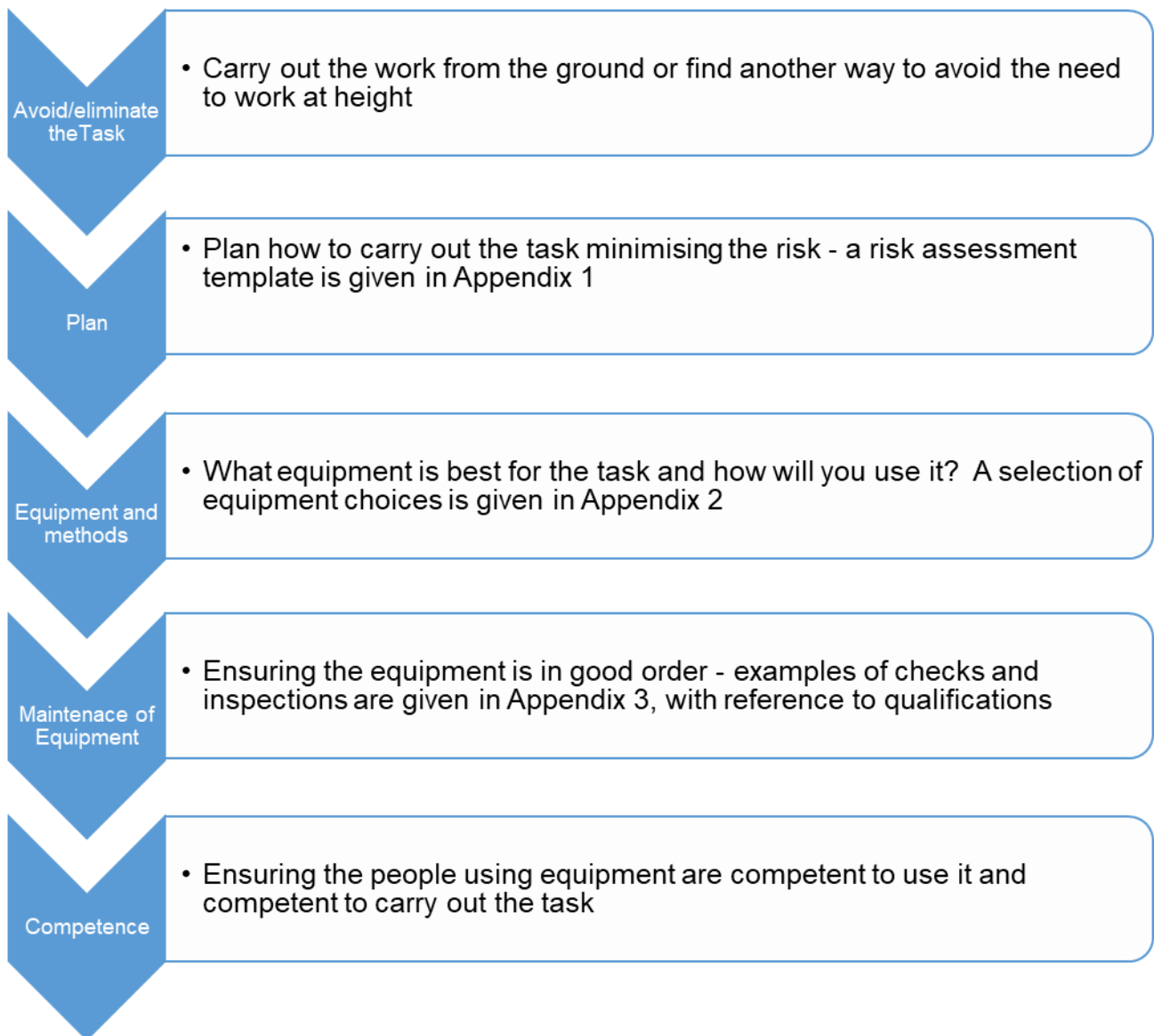
TITLE
<u>Working at height – HSE advice and guidance</u>
<u>Working at height – A brief guide</u>

Procedure

No person shall access an area where there is a risk of a fall from height until suitable and sufficient precautions are in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. Temporary arrangements may be required to protect those installing control measures.

No person shall carry out work on, near, over or from fragile surfaces unless adequate control measures are in place. It should not be assumed that fragile surfaces give any fall protection. Similar precautions should be taken when working on, near, over or from water.

The following flowchart sets out how HCC controls risks from work at height and forms the basis of the risk assessment template. It is the role of the manager overseeing the work to ensure that this procedure implemented and to agree and monitor the suitability of the risk assessment and control measures with staff the persons involved, staff and volunteers.



Avoid or eliminate the task

Wherever possible, work should be carried out from ground level to avoid the risks associated with working at height. For example:

- Rather than recover a football from a roof it maybe reasonable to buy a new one and wait to recover the original one when other more substantial work on the roof is planned.
- Have windows that can be cleaned from the inside or by using a pole cleaning system, allowing the operator to stand on the ground at all times.
- Designing-in safe access or elimination for the need to work at height as part of the build.
- Installing self-cleaning glass to remove the need to gain access.
- Installing light fittings which can be lowered to the ground for cleaning and bulb replacement.

Plan and risk assess the task

The manager overseeing or directing the work must ensure that a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk is undertaken, identify and provide suitable controls and safe access and monitor that those controls are in place and effective.

[Appendix 1](#) sets out the framework for such a suitable and sufficient assessment and plan, prompting consideration of the most significant issues. However, individual situations may create additional risks which will require consideration and control. Consideration should be given to the following measures.

- Consider whether the work at height can be carried out from an existing work place or using an existing means of access to get to and from the place of work.
- Select suitable work equipment (see below and Appendix 2) so as to prevent a fall.
- Where you cannot prevent a fall, consider suitable work equipment to minimise the distance and/or the consequences of a fall,
- Consider the wider risks including environmental and site use:
 - Do light, weather, ice, temperature and wind speed affect the risk?
 - Can the risk be reduced by carrying out work when the building is not in use, such as out of working hours for example?
 - Does working out of hours increase other risks such as lone working or darkness?
- Do you need a certain number of people to assist?
- Does the use of certain equipment increase risks in other ways such as:
 - Manual handling
 - Blocking fire exits or walkways
 - Materials falling
 - Ground conditions
- Does this task increase other risks such as:
 - Fire from hot works
 - Exposure to harmful substances
 - Confined spaces and potentially harmful atmospheres
- Consider foreseeable emergency situations and how you can rescue the persons working at height.
- Is the task best carried out by HCC employees (“in house”) or is a contractor with specialist expertise more suitable?

Selection of equipment and methods

Reduce the risk by selecting the most suitable work equipment for the specific task; Appendix [2](#) sets out a guide to help choose the correct equipment. Although the hierarchy gives general good practice, some tasks will justify the use of access equipment which offers less protection. Where this is considered acceptable, the reasoning must be recorded in the risk assessment.

The following should be considered when selecting work equipment

- Equipment that protects all users should generally be prioritised over equipment that only protects one user
- Equipment must be in good order and, in addition to being maintained, undergo visual checks prior to use
- Persons using equipment must be competent
- Training should be provided in line with nationally recognised standards

Equipment shall be in good order

Access equipment must be maintained in good order including:

- Pre-use checks
- Checks when initially installed

- Ongoing visual checks
- Statutory checks
- Damaged equipment should be removed from use immediately

[Appendix 3](#) gives examples of reasonable checks for various types of equipment.

Competency

All people who work at height or install access equipment must be competent to do so.

Competence can be described as the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely.

Other factors, such as aptitude and physical ability, can also affect someone's competence.

Further, it is important to also consider any limitations in a person's competence, i.e. what they cannot do, as well as what they can.

Falling objects and danger areas

When considering control measures for work at height, managers must also take steps to prevent any person being struck by falling objects. This applies to material that might fall from where persons are working at height, but also where material is stored at height, such as in racking or stacks of pallets in stores; or where items have been tied up or slung at height.

Where there is a risk of persons or objects falling and injuring persons below, those areas should be closed off and secured to prevent any access. Such areas should also be clearly marked and signed to make it clear that they are dangerous.

Appendix 1 – Task specific assessment template for work at height

To be completed by managers in consultation with staff.

Describe the work at height task	
Is the work necessary? Can it be eliminated?	
Can the task be carried out from the ground? If so avoid the risk.	
Can the work be carried out from an existing workplace, or use an existing means of access?	
How long will the job take? Can several jobs be combined to reduce the number of times you have to work at height?	
What other people may be at risk, and if so, how will that risk be controlled?	
Do environmental factors increase risk such as weather, light, etc.? Can control or reduce this risk?	
Can you provide equipment to prevent the fall? If not, can you provide equipment to reduce the fall distance, or the consequence of the fall?	
What access equipment is best suited for the task? Justify why this was chosen.	
Has the equipment been checked before use and is it in good order? Please state what checks are in place.	
Who has been chosen to complete the task?	

Please comment on training and competence.					
Where will access equipment be used and how? Will this control the risk of falling and falling materials?					
Manager's name		Signature		Date	
Person carrying out work at height		Signature		Date	

Appendix 2 – Selection of equipment

This list provides a hierarchy for the selection of equipment.

- Working from the ground
- Working from an existing work area with fixed protection (handrails/barriers)
- Use an existing means of access to get to the work at height.
- Equipment which protects all users and others and does not require specific user training, such as scaffolding erected and checked by competent specialist workers.
- Equipment which protects all users but requires trained operatives to erect, check and use, such as tower scaffolds and podium towers, Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) such as scissor lifts and cherry pickers.
- Ladders which are fixed to the structure.
- Ladders which are temporarily fixed or tied to the structure to prevent movement.
- Ladders which are equipped with stabilisation devices which effectively replace the need for securing.
- Unsecured leaning ladders and stepladders and the like, where the task is simple and short duration (usually no more than 30 minutes).
- Fall prevention harness and lanyard with tested fixed anchor point.
- Fall arrest harness and lanyard or running line with tested fixed anchor points.

Unacceptable means of access include:

- ***leaning ladders and stepladders used for long and complex tasks***
- ***an old wooden ladder found on site***
- ***a window ledge***
- ***the roof of a van***
- ***a stack of pallets***

Appendix 3 – Checks and examinations to ensure equipment is in good order and relevant training

It is essential that any equipment used to reduce the risk from work at height is in good order and suitable for its intended use. Some items of equipment require statutory examination, others just a competent person to inspect them.

The following list summarises these requirements.

Scaffolding

- Erected by a competent scaffolder with relevant level of qualification under the [Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme \(CISRS\)](#)
- Inspected by a competent person, and a record kept, on a weekly basis or after any change or adverse event, to ensure it remains safe.
- Daily and ongoing visual checks by supervisor or competent users.

Tower Scaffold

- Erected by a competent person with the relevant qualifications – [PASMA](#)
- Inspected on a weekly basis as scaffolds if left in situ for 7 days or more.
- Daily and ongoing visual checks by supervisor or competent users.

Mobile elevated Work Platforms (MEWPs)

- Statutory Thorough Examination every six months.
- Daily and ongoing visual checks by operators holding operators qualifications – [IPAF](#)

Ladders, steps and podiums

- Pre-use visual checks
- Periodic inspection by a competent person

Harness and line systems

- Statutory Thorough Examination at least every six months when in use.
- Daily and ongoing inspections and checks by appropriately-competent persons

Work equipment

[See Corporate Health and Safety Procedure – Work Equipment](#)