

# Working at Heights Hazards and Controls Guidance

This guidance document is provided as reference for managers and assessors to use during the planning and assessment of working at height. The table of hazards and suggested controls are by no means exhaustive.

The Risk Assessment Form should be used to record working at height risk assessments. The risk assessment form has been designed so it can be completed electronically and by using “**save as,**” assessors can save assessments to their own service folders.

For further advice and guidance see the Occupational Safety website [www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/hands/)

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Potential Hazards	Controls
<b>General</b>	
<p>Unclear if work at height needs to be done</p>	<p>Working at height should be avoided where possible. Where this is not possible consider using</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist contractors</li> <li>• Different method of working e.g. Drone</li> <li>• Provide different tooling and equipment which can be used from ground level.</li> </ul>
<b>Safe Place of Work (work sites and work zones)</b>	
<p>Work affecting other buildings, third parties and or members of the public</p> <p>Work taking place on or near to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highway, traffic routes or areas where vehicles or workplace transport are in operation.</li> <li>• Above bodies of water (streams, rivers, canal, dams, ponds, reservoirs etc) where there is a risk of drowning.</li> <li>• Fragile roofs or surfaces, including roof lights.</li> <li>• Ground openings, excavations or edges which could lead to a fall to a depth.</li> <li>• Overhanging structures, street furniture, or trees.</li> <li>• The presence of asbestos and/or asbestos containing materials (ACMs)</li> <li>• Power cables, towers or standards.</li> <li>• Gas or water pipework.</li> <li>• Air or ventilation ducting.</li> <li>• Others working in the same area, inc working at height.</li> </ul> <p>The effects of adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>Unstable and/or soft ground or flooring.</p> <p>Trailing cables, pipework, plant, tooling and equipment.</p> <p>Working with tooling, equipment and materials whilst at height.</p>	<p>Check premises or work area for the presence of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• asbestos, (premises asbestos register log)</li> <li>• gas/water pipes</li> <li>• electrical/data cabling</li> <li>• alarm systems</li> <li>• overhead obstructions or structures</li> <li>• pylons, towers, telegraph pole, lighting/traffic standards</li> <li>• street furniture and trees</li> <li>• excavations and openings</li> <li>• soft and uneven ground or flooring.</li> </ul> <p>Note – Ensure, where appropriate, that services etc. are isolated locked off.</p> <p>Consider the effects of the work on others e.g. neighbouring buildings, areas, rooms. May need to inform them of the proposed works.</p> <p>Create a safe working zone (barriers and cones) which excludes unauthorised persons and vehicles.</p> <p>Consider the need for traffic control; this may include “Chapter 8” requirements for “on highway” working.</p> <p>Check for warning signs displayed on buildings with fragile roof surfaces.</p> <p>Check ground flooring conditions when planning the proposed work.</p> <p>Ensure there is an agreed and tested emergency rescue plan in place.</p> <p>Check weather forecasts prior to work starting and monitor. Never work in adverse weather conditions, which would make the work unsafe e.g. high wind.</p> <p>Use good housekeeping regimes to maintain safe work sites and zones.</p>

Potential Hazards	Controls
<b>Selection of Working at Height Equipment</b>	
<p>Is the work likely to be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short duration</li> <li>• Take a prolonged period of time</li> <li>• Part of a larger project</li> <li>• Complex nature</li> <li>• Difficult to access</li> </ul> <p>Inappropriate access equipment being provided for use (often domestic standard equipment being used).</p> <p>Persons not trained, competent or authorised to work at height.</p> <p>Persons not trained, competent or authorised to use, operate access equipment provided.</p> <p>Access equipment not fit for use, e.g. damaged, classification, not maintained or inspected.</p>	<p>Consider the best forms of access equipment so the work can be completed safely, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that ladders, steps, trestles, platforms are the correct classification and not domestic use only. See the WAH Guidance for Managers.</li> <li>• Duration and frequency of the work taking place.</li> <li>• Loads – persons, equipment, materials.</li> <li>• Having the correct safety features and safeguards.</li> <li>• Periodic inspections and maintenance requirements are adhered to. This would include pre-use checks and “scaff tags.” Persons carrying out inspections must be competent.</li> <li>• Ensure users are trained, competent and authorised to use the equipment. This may include certified training and licences (MEWPs Cherry pickers).</li> <li>• All damaged or faulty access equipment is removed from use until repaired or replaced.</li> </ul> <p>Where persons are using ladders and steps they have read the HSE’s INDG455 “Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders.”</p>
<b>Minimising Falls and Consequences</b>	
<p>There is a risk for a fall from height, or to a depth, to lead to harm. These includes the risk of materials and tooling etc. falling from a height.</p> <p>Potential collapse of scaffold, access towers, ladders, MEWPs, Cherry pickers scissor lifts etc.</p>	<p>The work at height may require the following safeguards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety nets</li> <li>• Air bags</li> <li>• Fall arrest systems</li> <li>• Work positioning systems</li> <li>• Personal fall arrest systems.</li> </ul> <p>Ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable training is offered to those involved in the construction, use, alteration, dismantling and inspection of access equipment and safeguards.</li> <li>• All MEWPs, Cherry pickers, Scissor lifts or similar (owned or hired) are fit for purpose, used in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations, including maintenance and inspection (LOLER).</li> <li>• Safety features and safeguards arising from working at height do not interfere with any PPE being worn by the user.</li> </ul>

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Potential Hazards	Controls
<b>Competent Persons and Training</b>	
<p>Not having the appropriate physical capability to work at height safely.</p> <p>Lack of training and competency in using access equipment and working at height.</p> <p>Staff not following instruction and agreed safe working procedures.</p> <p>No suitable defect and fault reporting systems.</p>	<p>Ensure all</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work at height is authorised.</li> <li>• Persons working at height are required to be appropriately trained and physically capable to be able to carry out the work in reasonable safety.</li> <li>• Safe working procedures:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ require users to make pre use visual inspection checks of access equipment being used and report any hazards and defects</li> <li>○ are written in a way so they are easy to follow and eliminate the risk of short cutting and/or work arounds.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All faulty and defective access equipment is removed from use.</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision</b>	
<p>Unauthorised staff working at height.</p> <p>Work taking place out of normal working hours, night time, holidays or weekends</p> <p>Staff working alone.</p> <p>Lack of supervision of the work and staff.</p> <p>No emergency rescue and or support plans in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can the work be carried out at a more suitable time?</li> <li>• Potential lone working issues need to be addressed.</li> <li>• All working at height should be authorised.</li> <li>• Those working at height need to be given the appropriate level of supervision, including the support required in the event of an emergency.</li> <li>• Confirm:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ methods of communication</li> <li>○ how supervision checks will be made</li> <li>○ how workers will raise the alarm if in need of assistance or incapacitated.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>