

UNIVERSITY OF BATH HEALTH AND SAFETY STANDARD

Working at Height

Version Number	3	Date of Approval	7 th March 2023	Review Date	Three years from acceptance by UHSC
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Aims	<p>The purpose of this standard is to provide a common approach to managing working at height activities so as to prevent falls from height. This common approach can be summarised as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Avoid work at height as far as is reasonably practicable 2) Where work at height cannot be avoided, ensure that it is properly assessed, planned, supervised & implemented. 3) Where work at height cannot be avoided, implement suitable control measures applying the hierarchy of control: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Using an existing place of work suitably equipped to prevent falls as far as reasonably practicable. Where this isn't reasonably practicable or sufficient then ... b. Using suitable work equipment to prevent falls as far as reasonably practicable, with preference given to collective protection over personal protection. Where this isn't reasonably practicable or sufficient then ... c. Using equipment to minimise the effects of falling, with preference given to collective protection over personal protection. 				
Scope	This standard applies to all work at height activities. The standard applies with respect to work carried out by employees of the University as well as other persons to the extent that the University has control over their activities (such as student & contractors).				
Relevant Legislation	<p>Legal requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 • The Work at Height Regulations 2005 • The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulation 1999 (specifically the general requirement to assess health & safety risks) • The Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (which sets out the general requirements for work equipment) 				
Definitions	<p>Performing "work at height" means work in any place (including a place at or below ground level) where, if suitable measures are not in place or taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. This definition is wide ranging.</p> <p>A "fragile surface" means a surface which would be liable to fail if any reasonably foreseeable loading were to be applied to it. A roof unable to bear the weight of a person would be a fragile surface as would a skylight in an otherwise robust roof. Work carried out on a fragile surface is working at height as a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.</p> <p>A "working platform" means any platform used as a place of work or as a means of access to or egress from a place of work and includes any scaffold, suspended scaffold, cradle, mobile platform, trestle, gangway, gantry and stairway used as a "platform".</p> <p>Collective control measures are not defined in the regulations. Collective measures are those which provide protection to all persons at risk. Personal measures are those which provide protection only to the person using them. A handrail at the edge of a flat roof would be a collective measure, whereas a restraint system would be a personal measure. Collective measures are more reliable and where reasonably practicable should be used in preference to personal measures.</p> <p>A "personal fall protection system" means a fall prevention, work restraint, work positioning, fall arrest or rescue system. A personal fall protection system only provides protection to the person using it.</p>				
Responsibility for implementation	<p>Director of Estates</p> <p>Heads of Department & Department Safety Coordinators</p>				
Training availability:	Contact SHEW for advice.				

Standard to meet		Accountability	Reference documents and more information
Apply hierarchy level 1 - avoid work at height			
1	Work at height is avoided where it is reasonably practicable to do so.	Head of Department	
	Where work at height cannot be avoided - plan work & provide suitable supervision		
2	A suitable & sufficient risk assessment is made & recorded.	Head of Department	Risk Assessment Standard
3	The hierarchy of controls set by The Work at Height Regulations 2005 is applied when selecting the measures to be applied.	Head of Department	See the Step-by-step diagram: The general approach to be adopted to working at height
4	The work is properly planned. The plan made is proportionate to the complexity of the task & the risks associated with it. Suitable provisions for emergency rescue are included in the plan where this is necessary. Where the work is complex & has a high level of risk associated with or where the work may require an emergency rescue from height then the plan must be written down.	Head of Department	
5	The work is properly supervised by a competent person. The level of supervision is proportionate to the complexity of the task & the risks associated with it. The work is performed by persons competent to perform it. The level of competent is sufficient for the complexity of the task & the level of risk	Head of Department	
6	The work is performed in such a manner to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, falling objects causing injury to those working or in the area.	Head of Department	
7	Areas where there is a risk of falling or being struck by falling objects are secured as far as reasonably practicable against unauthorised access	Head of Department	
Apply hierarchy level 2 – Carry out work from an existing safe place where this is available.			
8	Where work at height cannot be avoided then an existing safe place of work should be used, where available, to carry out the work at height task. An example of an existing safe place of work could include a flat roof with adequate edge protection to prevent falls.	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 2 and schedule 3
9	A means of safe access and egress is provided to existing safe places of work	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 1
Apply hierarchy level 3– where an existing place of work that is safe cannot be used, use work equipment to prevent people from falling			

10	Collective fall protection measures are provided to prevent falls whilst working at height. This could include the provision of a scaffold, tower scaffold or appropriate working platform that incorporates adequate fall protection, such as handrails and toe-boards.	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 2
11	Where collective protection measures are insufficient to prevent falls, personal fall prevention measures are provided to prevent falls whilst working at height. Examples could include harnesses, inertia reels or fall arrest equipment.	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 4
Apply hierarchy level 4– where work equipment to prevent people from falling is not sufficient, use work equipment to minimise the effects of falling			
12	Collective measures, such as safety netting or air bags or similar, are provided where it is reasonably practicable to do so, to minimise the effects of falling whilst working at height.	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 4
13	Where collective fall minimisation measures are insufficient, personal fall minimisation measures are provided.	Head of Department	Work at Height Regulations 2005 – Schedule 5
Inspection of work at height equipment & place of work			
14	<p>Where the safety of work equipment is dependent upon how it is installed or assembled, the equipment is inspected by a competent person prior to use</p> <p>Where work equipment may suffer deterioration to a dangerous state, it is subject to a suitable inspection regime by a competent person so that deterioration can be detected & remedied in good time.</p> <p>A record of the inspections made are kept that is in compliance with The Work at Height Regulations 2005 Schedules.</p>	Head of Department	<p>This is a requirement of The Work at Height Regulations 2005 with inspection requirements set out in Schedule 7 and the Provision & Use of Work Equipment 1992 (for equipment not listed in the Work at Height Regulations)</p> <p>Guidance on checking stepladders and ladders is available at:</p> <p>https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf</p>
15	In each place of work at height, as far as reasonably practicable a check is made of the surface, every parapet, permanent rail or other such fall protection measure before each use.	Head of Department	

Step-by-step diagram: The general approach to be adopted to working at height

AVOID

- ❶ Do as much work as possible from the ground.

Practical examples might be:

- *using extendable tools from ground level*
- *lowering a lighting mast to ground level*
- *ground level assembly of edge protection*

PREVENT

- ❷ Use an existing place of work that is already safe.

Practical examples might be:

- *a concrete flat roof with edge protection*
- *a walkway around plant with fixed guard rails*

- ❸ Use work equipment to prevent people from falling.

Practical examples of might be:

Collective protection

- *mobile elevated work platforms (MEWP)*
- *tower scaffolds*
- *scaffolds*

Personal protection

- *a work restraint system that prevents a worker getting into a fall position*

MINIMISE

- ❹ If the risk of falling remains, take measures to minimise the effects.

Practical examples might be:

Collective protection

- *Minimising the fall effects using catch nets or air bags*

Personal protection

- *Minimising the fall distance using a fall arrestor system*

For each step, consider what is reasonably practicable & use “collective protection” in preference to “personal protection”

The Work at Height Regulations 2004 – Matters Covered by the Sched

SCHEDULE 1

- Requirements for places of work & means of access & egress

SCHEDULE 2

- Requirements for guard rails etc

SCHEDULE 3

- Requirements for working platforms
 - Part 1 - All working platforms
 - Part 2 - Additional requirements for scaffolding

SCHEDULE 4

- Requirements for collective safeguards for arresting falls

SCHEDULE 5

- Requirements for personal fall protection systems
 - Part 1 - Requirements personal fall protection systems
 - Part 2 - Additional requirements for work positioning systems
 - Part 3 - Additional requirements rope access & positioning techniques
 - Part 4 - Additional requirements fall arrest systems
 - Part 5 - Additional requirements for work restraint systems

SCHEDULE 6

- Requirements for ladders

SCHEDULE 7

- Particulars to be included in a report of an inspection