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SAFE WORKING AT HEIGHT MODEL POLICY



Responsibilities

Managers will ensure that all persons under their control, including any sub-contractors, have adequate knowledge of this procedure and comply with it at all times. They must also ensure that all operatives under their control are correctly trained in the safe use of any equipment which is used to gain access to work at height.

Managers will also have responsibility for correctly identifying work activities and providing all necessary equipment for working safely at height.

Work activities and compliance with this procedure will be monitored by Management on an on-going basis.

Employees must comply with this procedure and ensure that all access and working areas are used correctly and their integrity is not compromised.

Employees must not use any unauthorised access or working platform, improvised systems for access to height is strictly forbidden.

Purpose

This procedure provides a guide for the correct means of safe access which must be used when working at height. It will, when used correctly, prevent the risk of injury in the event of a fall from height or the risk from falling objects and will ensure that suitable and sufficient steps are taken, so far as is reasonably practicable, to prevent persons from gaining unsafe access to any work place.

The introduction of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 reinforced the general obligations placed on employers by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 to provide a safe place and safe system for work. This obligation has been further enforced by the introduction of the Working at Heights Regulations 2005 (WAH). The procedure detailed below is aimed at implementing the requirements of this legislation.

Scope

This procedure will apply to all Company activities where work at height is undertaken and will include the activities of any sub-contract companies.

Risk Assessment

Work at height will be included in the Company's General Risk Assessment Procedure as appropriate. Safe means of access provided will be in accordance with the hierarchy detailed below.

Definitions

At Height

Secure fencing/guard rails and working platforms shall be provided for the employee when identified from the Risk Assessment.

Access/Egress

The terms are comprehensive and refer to anything that can reasonably be regarded as means of entrance to, or exit from, a place of work. This access must be safe and kept properly maintained for any person working there.

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Permanent Working Platform

This is part of an existing structure having a permanent floor with secure handrails or fencing on all sides, it will also have protection against falling off.

Temporary Access Platform

This means any temporary structure on or from which persons perform work and any temporary structure which enables persons to gain access to, or allows materials to be taken to, any place included in the following:

- Scaffold – standing, slung, cantilever
- Mobile or zip up scaffold towers
- Trestles
- Cherry pickers, mobile elevated work platforms
- Scissor lifts
- Crane box, man baskets
- Ladders, steps

All of the above shall be assessed prior to works being undertaken.

Inspections

All the above forms of access equipment require inspections in accordance with statutory duties. These inspections must be carried out by competent persons and will be recorded in the appropriate inspection register.

Inspections will be co-ordinated by the Directors who are responsible for ensuring that all equipment is recalled for inspection and passed as safe. Equipment will be marked or colour coded to indicate that it is safe to use.

Procedure

General Rules

Work at height will be carried out from permanent platforms where they exist.

Where permanent platforms do not exist, a temporary form of access will be provided to prevent, as far as is reasonably practicable, the risk of falling.

Work at height on any platform must be carried out from within the confines of the correct access provided.

All working platforms must be so constructed as to prevent objects from falling off.

Prevention from falls by using a safety harness with fall arrest system will only be considered as a last resort where no other means of safe access is possible.

Every scaffold must be suitable for the task for which it was constructed. Employees must not under any circumstance step outside the confines of the safe access provided.

At no time should the integrity of any means of access be altered or tampered with by employees. All alterations or any other maintenance will be carried out by approved persons who have been authorised to carry out the work.

Every scaffold must be securely tied to the structure or building unless it has been constructed to create its own stability.

The form of safe access selected must be adequate for the range of tasks that are to be carried out from it.

Only approved access equipment will be used to work at any height above or on floor level. Improvised access will not be permitted.

Employees will only be allowed to work on, or operate, access equipment for which they are adequately trained.

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Specific Training

Specific training will be required for the following forms of access equipment:

- The construction of any scaffold
- The erection of any mobile scaffold tower
- The operation of:
 - Mobile elevated work platforms/cherry pickers
 - Scissor lifts
 - Man baskets
 - Crane baskets

In addition, operatives will be given specific safety awareness training for roof work and the correct use of safety harnesses. This training will be provided by approved training organisations in accordance with statutory requirements

Ladders

Ladders will be used for temporary access only and must be secured by being tied to the structure to prevent them from falling.

All ladders must be inspected and marked as safe (see above).

Fall Arrest Systems

All fall arrest systems must conform to EN361 and must be a full body type with the correct length lanyard attached which conforms to EN355. Fall arrest systems must be secured to an anchorage that is capable of withstanding shock load.

All persons who are required to use fall arrest systems must be trained in pre-use inspections, correct fitting and storage.

Fall arrest systems must be tested and issued with a test certificate, they must be inspected before use every time.

Safe Access Hierarchy

The list of safe access detailed below is intended as a guide to the order in which the provision of access to height should be considered. When considering the means of access, start with the safest. If that is impractical, consider the next safest option until the most practicable solution has been found.

- Permanent platform
- Fixed scaffold
- Mobile elevated work platform
- Scissor Lift
- Tower scaffold
- Safety netting
- Fall arrest system (only as a last resort)
- Ladder/steps (temporary access only).

Date: 01/01/21

Signed By: Alex Baul (Director) 

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