

Safety Code of Practice

July 2017

Working at Heights Policy



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1. POLICY STATEMENT AND INTRODUCTION

This Policy reflects the DBMAC Board's commitment to meeting the requirements of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. It identifies the responsibilities of The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company (DBMAC), its employees and provides guidance to those charged on their behalf with taking action necessary to ensure compliance. The extent of such action will be dependent on the level of risk of each activity undertaken 'at height'. In the majority of instances, the work involved is likely to be minimal and low risk, however, where work at height is a more significant issue, the requirement to manage it will be more onerous.

The Policy is not intended to provide definitive guidance to the Regulations and where any doubt exists as to the action to be taken or advice or assistance being required, contact should be made with the health and safety lead for the individual DBMAC academy or The DBMAC health and safety support provider.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 apply to all work undertaken at height wherever there is the potential for a fall to occur which may cause personal injury. No height limits are specified in the Regulations in recognition that all work undertaken at height has the ability to result in injury. The Regulations apply to work undertaken inside or outside of buildings.

Work at height can range from the routine use of a stepladder to replace light bulbs, retrieve files on shelving etc, which is a routine activity undertaken in many offices, to potentially higher risk activities when refurbishment or construction projects are taking place and access onto the roofs of buildings is required. This Policy should be read in conjunction with all activities involving work at height in order to minimise any risk of injury occurring.

In the majority of instances this will involve situations such as the stepladder example already given. This will require a risk assessment of the task(s) followed by instructions to any further staff in what to do and not do, including not standing on chairs, always using a stepladder and not overreaching.

Risk assessments must be undertaken by a competent working at heights user or the health and safety lead at the academy school/site.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

The Principal and the Health and Safety lead have the delegated responsibility from the DBMAC Board to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling from height by ensuring:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised
- No work at height is undertaken if it is safe and reasonably practicable to do it other than at height
- All work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety
- The place where work at height is done is safe
- Staff or contractors understand their responsibility to undertake a risk assessment prior to working at height
- Staff or contractors working at height are physically capable
- Staff working at height are competent and appropriately trained
- Risks of personal injury from falling objects are avoided or controlled
- Access equipment provided is suitable for the activity
- Access equipment is regularly inspected to an agreed schedule and records are kept
- To immediately remove any unsafe access equipment from use
- Suitable storage space is provided for access equipment
- The use of access equipment is monitored and where unsafe practices are identified they are immediately stopped

- Volunteers and work experience placements do not undertake working at height activities

It is the responsibility of all employees to:

- Consider prior to any working at height activity if the task can be achieved safely from ground level e.g. using a pole to open a window
- Only use access equipment with which they feel competent
- Ensure they are fit to undertake the task and have no medical conditions which may affect ability to work at height, e.g. vertigo and ear infections.
- Ensure they are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription and over the counter medicine, which could affect their ability to work at height
- Inspect equipment before each use and report any defects immediately to the Health and Safety lead
- Report any safety hazard to the Health and Safety lead
- Carry out a risk assessment prior to each new activity
- Only use access equipment in accordance with procedures, instruction and training unless considered by the employee to be unsafe in which case further advice must be sought before continuing
- Wear suitable footwear e.g. no dangling laces, mud on shoes
- Follow the School's Lone Working Procedures
- NEVER use chairs, tables or other items of furniture as access equipment
- NEVER bring access equipment into work

2.1 Contractors

Where contractors carry out work on the school site they will be expected to work to the standards outlined in these procedures, however their access means will not be restricted. Where contractors are not complying the Principal or Health and Safety lead will firstly speak with the contractors or their supervisor. If the matter cannot be resolved either the Principal or Health and Safety lead will seek advice from the school health and safety advisory team (currently Oxfordshire County Council) and reserve the right to stop any work being undertaken on any site until the matter is resolved.

3. ACCIDENT PREVENTION + RISKS

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 (amended) requires that, “every employer shall take suitable and sufficient action to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury”. These procedures are designed to support this aim and to give practical guidance to all staff and contractors, who might be expected to undertake working at height activities.

Examples of working at height include:

- Putting up displays
- Accessing high-level storage (i.e. items that cannot be reached/stored safely from floor level)
- Changing light bulbs/tubes
- Window cleaning (i.e. where this cannot be safely carried out from floor level)
- Clearing out gutters

The most common causes of accidents whilst working at height include:

- Not securely placing or fixing equipment
- Climbing access equipment with loads

- Overreaching or overbalancing
- Slippery substances transferred onto access equipment (e.g. mud)
- Placing access equipment on slippery floors
- Falls through fragile surfaces
- Unsafe or faulty equipment

The Working at Height Regulations 2005 requires that:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised
- Those involved in work at height are trained and competent
- The risks from working at height are assessed and appropriate equipment is selected and used
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled
- Equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected
- Consideration is given to weather conditions that could endanger health and safety
- The place where work at height is done is safe
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled

3.1 High risk activities

All high-risk working at height activities must only be carried out by specialist contractors with the appropriate competency and equipment to undertake the tasks safely.

3.2 Raising staff awareness

The DBMAC has available various resources to increase staff awareness, including short online training, power point presentation, training DVDs and risk assessment forms, This should be covered under health and safety header during department or team meetings (if applicable).

3.3 School access equipment

The appropriate means of access within school are step ladders or extension ladders. Only competent or trained staff can use ladders in the course of their work. Chairs, tables, boxes, shelving and other non-load bearing objects are not appropriate means of access and therefore must not be used.

3.4 Hierarchy of controls

Before undertaking any working at height activity employees and contractors must take into account the following hierarchy of controls outlined in the Regulations:

- To avoid work at height wherever possible i.e. can the work be undertaken safely from ground level
- Where you cannot avoid working at height, a risk assessment must be carried out to identify and implement controls designed to prevent a fall
- If the risk of a fall, person or object, cannot be eliminated, further controls must be put in place to minimize the height of the fall and the extent of the potential injuries or damage

4. Equipment and Checks

4.1 Inspection of ladders

It is the responsibility of the health and safety lead to ensure school ladders undergo a six monthly inspection and a record of the inspection is kept. Access equipment identified as having a defect must be immediately removed from use.

All staff undertaking a working at height activity must also visually inspect the ladder before use to ensure:

- The general condition of the ladder is sound - clean and dry, free from wet paint, oil, mud etc on either the rungs or the stiles

- There are no visible defects – no sharp edges, wing nuts are tight,
- The slip resistant rubber or plastic feet are in a good state of repair with nothing that would prevent the feet from making direct contact with the ground
- Steps are stable
- There are no rungs missing, loose or bent
- No stiles are damaged or bent
- No missing or loose screws or rivets
- There is no corrosion
- The ladder is level to the naked eye

Appendix 1 – Ladder inspection sheet

Access equipment identified as having a defect must be immediately removed from use and reported to the health and safety lead

4.1.1 Stepping stools or low level platforms

It is deemed acceptable to usage stepping stools or low level platforms in the workplace. There are many variations to choose from and all offer different ways of working safely. These need to follow the same processes checks and safe working practice guidelines within this policy. The style or type of equipment in this range will depend on the requirements for the task but safety checks and risk assessments follow the same format and guidelines in this policy.

This equipment is also covered in Appendix 1: Ladders (annual and 6 monthly inspections)

4.2 Storage of ladders

Ladders must be stored safely so as not to create a trip hazard. Ladders should not be stored by hanging from the stile or rung. Where possible, store in a dry location to protect equipment from weather damage.

4.3 Safe working practice

Only use a ladder:

- If the maximum time in one position does not exceed 30 minutes
- For light work - stepladders are not suitable for strenuous or heavy work e.g. carrying loads of over 10kg
- If you can maintain three point of contact – hands and feet. If a handhold is not practicable the risk assessment will have to justify whether it is safe to proceed considering:
 - The height of the task
 - Whether it is light work (not carrying more than 10kg)
 - Whether it avoids overreaching
 - Whether the user's feet are fully supported
 - Whether the ladder can be tied

Do not position a ladder:

- Where it can be knocked by a door or window – secure doors (not fire exits) and windows. If this is impractical have a person standing guard at a doorway/window
- Where it may get struck by a passing vehicle
- Where it can cause a hazard or where it can be struck or dislodged
- Within 6m of an overhead power line

Only use ladders

- On firm ground, or spread the load (e.g. use a board)
- On a clean, solid, level surface free from loose material (sand, packaging material) so the feet can grip. Be aware of shiny surfaces.

Before commencing work ensure:

- You have considered the hierarchy of controls
- The ladder is the right height; never use boxes or bricks etc to gain extra height.
- Each foot is on a clean, level, firm footing and all feet are in contact with the ground with the legs fully open
- The ladder is in good condition
- The ladder is positioned with the rungs facing the work activity and not side on, which is less stable
- A risk assessment has been undertaken that considers the hazards, risks and controls

Safe use of ladders

- Only use ladders for light duty, short duration work (no more than 30 minutes in any one position)
- Only go as high as you need
- Only one person should be on a ladder at any one time
- Don't use the top two steps of a ladder unless it has a suitable handrail. (Don't use the top three steps of a swing back or double sided ladders where a step forms the very top of the ladder, this should ensure a handhold is readily available).
- Don't carry heavy or awkward shaped loads up a ladder.
- Don't overload it – your combined weight and that of the load you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the ladder
- Always keep one hand free to grip the ladder when climbing
- Ask people to pass items to you or use a tool belt
- When working from ladders try and maintain three points of contact with it at all times (e.g. both feet and one hand)
- Do not use a ladder if you have a medical condition or are taking medication that could affect your safety, or if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Make sure you have the right footwear e.g. clean in good condition without dangling laces
- When going up or down a ladder take each rung one at a time and don't rush, use both hands to grip the ladder whenever possible
- Make sure you do not miss the lower rungs as you step off the ladder
- Do not overreach - move the ladder so that you keep between the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task. Keep your weight over the centre of the ladder
- Do not place a foot on another surface, such as a window frame, to extend your reach
- Do not throw or hang things from ladders
- For higher risk work, such as applying a side on force that cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, for example, by tying the steps to a suitable point
- Access equipment must never be used when people are underneath

4.4 Risk Assessment

- All staff working at height activity must complete a risk assessment prior to commencing the task. The risk assessment must consider:
 - The task to be completed – duration of the task, whether it is light or heavy work
 - The most appropriate equipment options (not just what is available)
 - The hazards that are present – the height of the task, work area, weather conditions, fall from height
 - The necessary controls to achieve a safe system of work – safe handhold, avoids overreaching/side loading, ladder is tied

To aid staff, health and safety leads at individual school/site may have a task covered with a generic risk assessment for common repetitive tasks undertaken within school, e.g. putting up displays, storing items above head level. Staff must consider whether the generic risk assessment is appropriate and relevant for the task and if not must complete and record the findings of a new assessment as part of the planning process of work.

No working at height activity may proceed if the findings of the risk assessment indicate to do so would place an individual at significant risk.

4.5 Training

It is the responsibility of the Health and Safety lead at individual academy/site to ensure employees required to work at height regularly receive:

- General training in the risks of working at height
- Specific training in the equipment that they will be using

Appropriate training must be identified at induction and provided to the health and safety lead before any employee is allowed to work at height.

4.6 Purchasing of new ladders

All new ladders that are purchased must meet the British or European standards for any usage across the DBMAC academies. Classifications and quality should always be checked before purchasing.

Appendix 2 – Ladder classifications detail

Approved by AUDIT COMMITTEE: OCTOBER 2017. To be reviewed: October 2020

Verified by DBMAC Company Secretary _____Maureen D Jackson_____

Date__4th October 2017_____

Appendix 1

Ladders (Annual & 6 Monthly Inspection)

Ladders should be checked briefly before every use and formally inspected every 6 months (if used once a week or more) or 12 months (if used less than once a week) using this checklist.

Department/ Location		Classification and I.D. No.	Class	Class	Class	I.D. No.
			1	EN131	111	
Inspected by (competent person)		Checked by (person responsible)				
No	Item	Pass	Fail	Condition		
1. Straight ladder						
1.0	Loose rungs (move by hand)					
1.1	Loose nails, screws, bolts, etc.					
1.2	Loose mounting brackets, etc.					
1.3	Cracked, broken, split stays					
1.4	Splinters on stays or rungs					
1.5	Cracks in metal stays					
1.6	Bent metal stays or rungs					
1.7	Damaged/worn non-slip devices					
1.8	Wobbly					
1.9	Feet					
2. Stepladder						
2.0	Wobbly					
2.1	Loose/bent hinge spreaders					
2.2	Stop on spreaders broken					
2.3	Loose hinges					
2.4	Feet					
3. Extension ladder						
3.0	Defective extension locks					
3.1	Defective rope pulley					
3.3	Deterioration of rope					
3.4	Feet					
4. Trestle ladder						
4.0	Wobbly					
4.1	Defective hinges					
4.2	Defective hinge-spreaders					
4.3	Stop on spreads defective					
4.4	Defective centre guide for extension					
4.5	Defective extension locks					
4.6	Feet					
5. Fixed ladder						
5.0	Ladder cage					
5.1	Deterioration in all metal parts					

5.2	Feet			
6.	Step Up			
6.0	Defective Hinges			
6.1	Defective Hinge lock			
6.2	Platform			
6.3	Wobbly			
6.4	Defective Rungs			
6.4	Feet			
6.5	Other damage			
7.	General			
7.1	Painting of wooden ladders			
7.2	Identification			
7.3	Storage			
8.	Remedial Item No.			
9.	Signed: competent person			
10.	Signed: user responsible			
11.	Date			
12.	Notes			

Appendix 2 – Ladder classifications detail

Classification	Duty Rating	Maximum Static Vertical Load	Application	
Class 1	130 kg	175 kg	Industrial	
Class EN131	115 kg	150 kg	Commercial	
Class III	95 kg	125 kg	Domestic	

Class 1 Ladders are the highest rated ladders in terms of strength and quality. These ladders are suitable for use in heavy duty industrial applications and environment's.

Class EN131 Is a Europe wide classification and it replaces the old British Class II Ladder Standard, Within the UK this classification is known as BS EN131. Ladders of this type are most suitable for commercial light trade work or heavy duty DIY use.

Class III Ladders are only suited to occasional light domestic tasks and are definitely not suitable for use within any commercial or trade environment.

