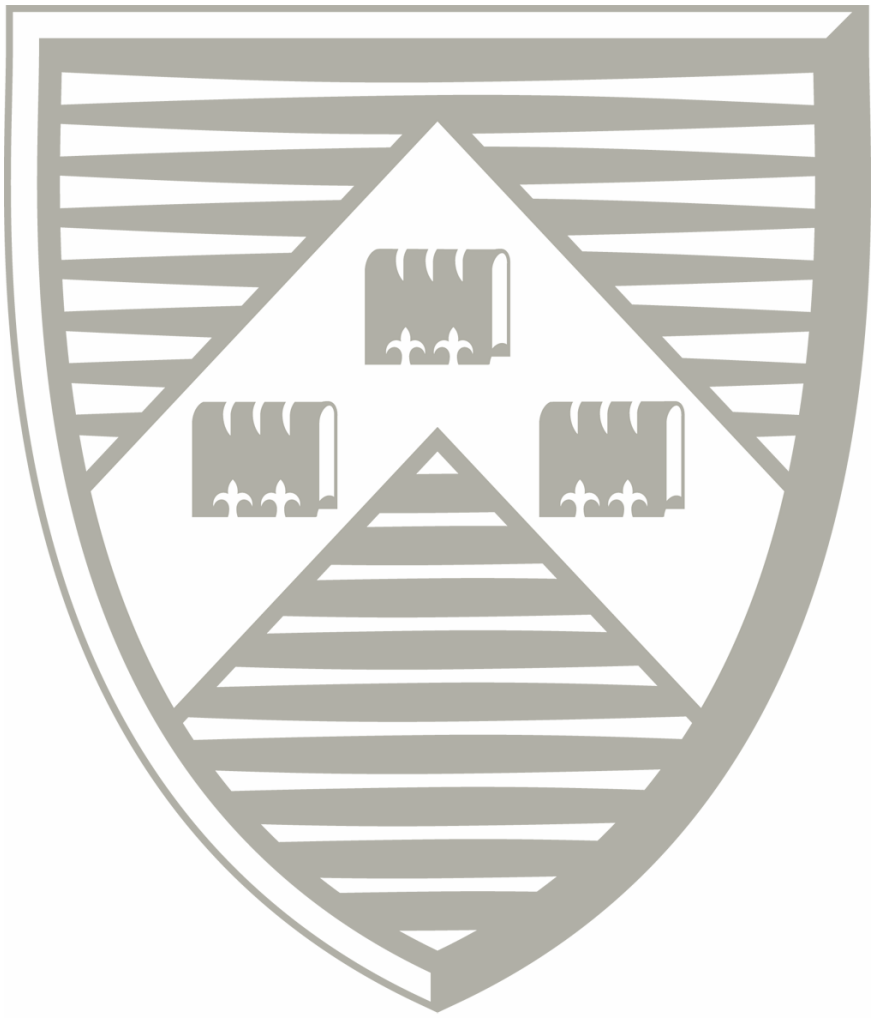
The Workplace Health and Safety Office



UNIVERSITY POLICY AND MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Working at Height

Statement

This University Policy and Management Procedure was approved and authorised by the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee (now Workplace Health and Safety Committee) ***11 November 2008*** *on behalf of the University of York Council and forms part of the Health and Safety Policy of the University of York.*

This document is a Management Procedure for good health and safety management practice. This Management Procedure provides Deans of Faculty, Heads of Departments, Heads of College and all managers, staff and students with the necessary information to incorporate healthy and safe practices and relevant procedures into their activities. Divergence from this Management Procedure may result in Deans of Faculty, Heads of Departments, Heads of College and the University of York being exposed to possible legal proceedings.

The use of this Management Procedure and the incorporation of its requirements into working practices and activities will ensure that the University of York and its community achieves compliance with its legal duties with regards to health and safety.

The most recent version of this Management Procedure is available at https://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hsas/safetynet/atoz.htm.

Date of Review	*December 2023*	*By*	*The Director of Health and Safety*
Date of Last Review	*February 2019*	*By*	*The Director of Health, Safety and Security*
Date of Next Review	*December 2025*	*By*	

UNIVERSITY POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of York (University) recognises its management responsibilities for the risks and hazards associated with work activities involving work at height. The University will ensure that all relevant control measures are introduced and implemented to prevent injury or harm to those undertaking work or who may be affected by work activities involving Working at Height.

The Working at Height Regulations 2005 consolidated the **Construction (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996** and the **Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992.** These Regulations include provisions for the management and use of access equipment and other items of mobile work equipment. The University will select workplace access equipment and associated equipment which are suitable for Working at Height and comply with or exceed the above Regulations. University staff that manage and control work at height shall therefore ensure that all access equipment is used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications and instructions.

In addition, the Regulations include:

- A requirement to inspect workplace access and equipment where significant risk could result from incorrect installation or relocation, deterioration, or as a result of exceptional circumstances; and
- A requirement to record the results of those inspections

This Management Procedure provides instructions on how Working at Height relates to maintenance activities and any other approved and authorised work at height that will be managed on site(s) and premises in work situations which are under the control of the University.

2. DEFINITIONS

Working at Height

This risk-based approach to Working at Height means that there is **no minimum height** requirement for undertaking work at height. A place is 'at height' if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level. This approach does not extend to cover slips and trips on the same level or falls on permanent stairways if no building or maintenance work is taking place.

Fragile Surfaces

A fragile surface is "*any surface liable to fail if any reasonably foreseeable load is applied to it*", and this will include surfaces such as sky lights and other horizontal or angled glazing in roofs, asbestos cement sheets and other non-load bearing materials, lightweight ceilings constructed over internal offices, etc.

Safe System of Work (SSoW)

This includes the provision of work equipment which is suitable and sufficient for the work

activity which is maintained in good working order and will include detailed Method Statements supported by suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments.

Method Statement (MS)
A Method Statement is a document detailing how a particular process will be carried out. It should detail the possible dangers and risks associated with a particular part of a project or process and the methods of control to be established, to show how the work will be managed safely.

Permit to Work (PtoW)
This is a written authority signed and issued by an authorised and Competent Person (CP) to allow work at height. This authority specifies the appropriate safety precautions which have been taken.

Person in Charge (PinC)
This person has accepted the PtoW or Method Statement (low risk situations) for a particular task or work activity from a CP.

Competent Person (CP)
This is a person with sufficient technical knowledge and adequate training to prevent danger or, where appropriate, injury, during his or her work. For the examination of safety equipment they should be appointed in writing by their employer.

Work Team
This includes all persons nominated on the Method Statement with roles, duties and functions relating to Working at Height.

3. APPLICATION OF THIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

This Management Procedure provides a framework for the University to ensure that work at height is carried out in a safe manner and in compliance with legal obligations and Codes of Practice and relates to controlling work at height at all premises, facilities, functions and events for which the University is responsible:

- Minimising the risks associated with Working at Height
- The appointment of suitably Competent Persons including contractors
- The documentation used in the application of this Management Procedure.

Compliance with this Management Procedure is mandatory.

ARRANGEMENTS

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks arising from Working at Height and associated equipment is to be undertaken by the person managing and controlling the work at height.

All Working at Height activities are to be assessed, and where appropriate safety equipment introduced. Five simple steps need to be followed when undertaking a risk assessment of hazards at work. These are:

- Identify the hazards posed by any Working at Height activities; for example, consider whether there is a danger of people or equipment falling from height.
- Identify who might be exposed and protect them from the consequences of work at height.
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or whether more needs to be done to control Working at Height risks for example, selecting suitable work equipment to perform work at height.
- Record the findings.
- Review and update the findings at regular intervals (at least annually), and whenever significant changes have taken place.

4.1 Hazards

All Working at Height activities are to be adequately planned and controlled to ensure that the correct equipment is used for the purpose for which they are designed, are properly maintained, elimination of dangerous practices, short cuts and staff are properly trained. The following are to be taken into consideration:

- All work at height including possible falls and falling equipment
- Access equipment including the use of ladders, stepladders, podiums and tower scaffolds, scaffolding, vertical (scissor) lifts, boom type lifts (cherry pickers) and Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWP)
- Adequate training arrangements, site and environment conditions
- Planning and organising the work, the complexity, duration and frequency
- The people involved and their numbers, competency and levels of supervision
- Safe access to and from the work area
- Overreaching/balancing when Working at Height
- Protecting people from other hazards, such as falling objects etc
- Manufacturers' instructions for the safe operation of access equipment and working platforms being disregarded or misused
- Unsafe use of resources
- People not involved with Working at Height activities.

4.2 Fragile Surfaces

All work on or near fragile surfaces will be avoided. Where such work cannot be avoided then all reasonably practicable control measures will be employed to mitigate the possibility of falls or falling objects and the consequences of such falls. Control measures will include:

- The selection and use of suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails to minimise the risk of falls or falling objects
- Where the risk of falls or falling objects remains minimise the distance and effect of a fall

- The use of suitable and sufficient barriers, warning notices and signage to make people aware of the dangers
- Restricting access and egress to authorised persons only and using the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) include fall arrest equipment at all times.

4.3 Access Equipment Selection

Ladders are only to be used as working platforms when it is not reasonably practicable to use any other potentially safer method or equipment such as tower scaffolds. Ladders are only to be used as a means of access when it is not reasonably practicable to install permanent stairs.

Work from ladders is to be restricted to a maximum duration necessary to complete simple tasks (for example the changing of a light fitting or bulb). This is only acceptable where it is not reasonably practicable to use another method of access equipment. Use of ladders in this manner is to be strictly supervised and planned to prevent any possible injury as a result.

Ladders are to be secured to prevent them from slipping during use, for example by tying them to an existing structure or using a ladder stabiliser or anti-slip device. Stabilising a ladder by having a colleague 'foot' the base by standing on the bottom run is only suitable when it is not practicable to secure the ladder in any other way. Any undertaking involving the use of ladders is hereby deemed a two person operation.

Step ladders may only be used where there is no other practical means of undertaking the work safely. The selection of step ladders is to be restricted to such equipment that incorporates an integral working platform. The use of wooden step ladders is prohibited.

Any scaffolding is only assembled, dismantled, or significantly altered by appropriately trained and competent workers under correct levels of supervision by a competent and skilled person. Where scaffolding is complex, it may be necessary for a CP to draw up a plan for its assembly, use and dismantling.

Personal fall protection systems are only to be used if the assessment of risk indicates that they can be used safely, and that the use of safer work equipment is not justified. Rope access systems consist of at least two separately anchored lines, unless the assessment of risk shows that the use of a second line would pose a higher risk.

Mobile Towers and Powered Access Units including MEWP are to ensure that only competent staff has access to this type of equipment and that suitable levels of supervision are available.

Consideration should also be given where such equipment by nature of its design may not allow the correct level of height to allow safe work to be undertaken. Equipment mobility

must also be considered and be planned into any undertaking. When using this equipment a safe system of work must include:

- Planning the task/work
- Assessment of the risk
- Other hazards
- Environmental conditions
- Floor loading and stability issues
- Traffic and routes including pedestrians
- Additional safety equipment and PPE
- Emergency procedures.

6. TRAINING

The University will provide adequate and appropriate health and safety training to employees who are already users or will become users within their undertakings. The amount of training those employees need, will depend on their previous experience and the type of work they will be carrying out. Training is to include:

- Recognition of hazards
- Causes of risk
- What can the user do to correct them
- Correct selection and safe use of equipment
- Equipment limitations
- Risk assessment process
- Accident procedures.

APPENDIX 1
University Policy and Management Procedure
Working at Height
Risk Assessment

ACTIVITY			LOCATION	
ASS DATE	**REV DATE**	**REV NO**	**REF NO**	**ASSESSOR (PRINT)**
	Refer to Register			

1. WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS THAT REQUIRE CONTROL *(Tick to indicate)*

01	Exposure to Asbestos Containing Materials	☐	21	Working at Height or Falls from Height	☐
02	Hazardous Substances (CoSHH)	☐	22	Falling Objects / Equipment / People	☐
03	Storage / Stacking of Goods	☐	23	Slips, Trips, Falls at the same level	☐
04	Excessive Hours / Unsocial Hours	☐	24	Lone Working / Remote Working Arrangements	☐
05	Low / High Temperature Working Environment	☐	25	Environmental Factors (rain, snow, ice, wind, etc)	☐
06	Exposure to Sources of Heat / Fire / Flame	☐	26	Electricity (shock, burns, fire, arcing, explosion)	☐
07	Fire - Combustible Materials	☐	27	Incorrect Selection of Access Equipment	☐
08	Fire - Flammable Liquids	☐	28	Incorrect Installation of Access Equipment	☐
09	Use of Sharps / Hand Tools / Power Tools	☐	29	Poorly Planned and Assessed Work / Project	☐
10	Hazards leading to Eye Injury	☐	30	Insecure Assess Equipment	☐
11	Confined Spaces	☐	31	Unstable Surfaces / Uneven Ground	☐
12	Sources of Stress	☐	32	Fragile Materials / Surfaces / Coverings	☐
13	Violence / Aggression	☐	33	Defective Access Equipment	☐
14	Workspace / Egress / Access Arrangements	☐	34	Inadequate Edge Protection / Guardrails etc	☐
15	Entrapment by Moving Machine Parts	☐	35	Lack of Warning Signage / Barriers / Zoned Area	☐
16	Access to Dangerous Machine Parts	☐	36		☐
17	Operation of Mechanical Handling Equipment	☐	37		☐
18	Dangers from Vehicles Manoeuvring / Reversing	☐	38		☐
19	Loading / Unloading of Vehicles	☐	39		☐
20	Manual Handling Operations (MHO)	☐	40		☐

EXPLANATORY REMARKS

2. DECIDE WHO MIGHT BE HARMED

PERSONS AFFECTED		CLASSIFICATION		NUMBERS EXPOSED	
Employees	☐	Young	☐	1 - 10	☐
Other Workers	☐	Inexperienced	☐	10 - 20	☐
Public	☐	Experienced	☐	20 - 50	☐
Other (Specify)	☐	Disabled (Specify)	☐	50 Plus	☐

3. EVALUATE THE RISK (INITIAL RISK RATING)

RATE SEVERITY			RATE PROBABILITY		
LOW	(1)	All other injuries	LOW	(1)	Where harm will seldom occur
MEDIUM	(2)	Injuries causing absence of more than 3 days	MEDIUM	(2)	Where harm will frequently occur
HIGH	(3)	Death and or Major Injuries as per RIDDOR	HIGH	(3)	Where certain or near harm will occur

Express the overall hazard and risk in accordance with the guidelines given above expressing it in terms whichever is applicable as High (H), Medium (M), Low (L); (Risk = Severity x Probability) i.e. 1 x 2 = 2

SEVERITY RATING	PROBABILITY RATING	INITIAL RISK RATING		L	M	H
		Risk = Severity x Probability =		☐	☐	☐

RISK RATING EVALUATION

(1) = Low Risk (L) Maintain & Review Control Measures: (2 – 4) = Medium Risk (M) Improve Control Measures:

(6 – 9) = High Risk (H) Improve Control Measures and Consider Stopping Work Activity

4. EVALUATE THE RISK AND DECIDE IF EXISTING CONTROLS MEASURES ARE ADEQUATE

01	Present Controls Satisfactory *(Are Listed Below)*	☐	16	Permit to Work / Hot Work Permit	☐

02	Training and Competence	☐	17	Method Statement / Safe System of Work (SSoW)	☐
03	Written Procedure / Local Rules	☐	18	Weather Conditions / Environmental Factors	☐
04	Specific Information / Rescue Procedures	☐	19	Temperature / Humidity / Lighting	☐
05	Emergency / Rescue Arrangements	☐	20	Mechanical Handling Equipment (MHE)	☐
06	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	☐	21	Eliminate / Substitute Substance / Materials	☐
07	Fall Arrest Equipment	☐	22	Housekeeping Arrangements	☐
08	Safety Signs / Barriers Zoned Areas	☐	23	Communications Arrangements	☐
09	Appropriate Plant / Tools / Machinery	☐	24	Medical Intervention/Personal Hygiene	☐
10	Stable Surface and Level Ground Conditions	☐	25	First Aid Arrangements	☐
11	Fire Safety Precautions	☐	26	Access / Egress Arrangements	☐
12	Personal Posture	☐	27	Restricted Access / Zoned Area	☐
13	Stable Load / Contents / Equipment	☐	28	Correct Set-up / Use of Access Equipment	☐
14	Edge Protection	☐	29	Low Risk / Short Duration Work (Ladders Only)	☐
15	Appropriate Access Equipment	☐	30		☐

CM INDEX	CONTROL MEASURE TO BE ADOPTED	ACTION DATE

ASSESSOR COMMENTS

5. EVALUATE THE RISK (FINAL RISK RATING)

SEVERITY RATING	PROBABILITY RATING	INITIAL RISK RATING		L	M	H
		Risk = Severity x Probability =		☐	☐	☐

SIGNED		POSITION	
PRINT NAME		DATE	

6. COMMUNICATE THE RISK ASSESSMENT TO THOSE WHO MIGHT BE EXPOSED OR AT RISK

Assessment Agreed		Signed	
Additional Controls Agreed		Print Name	
Date and Time		Position	

Action to be taken / Comments:

RISK RATING EVALUATION

(1) = Low Risk (L) Maintain & Review Control Measures: (2 – 4) = Medium Risk (M) Improve Control Measures:

(6 – 9) = High Risk (H) Improve Control Measures and Consider Stopping Work Activity