

# ASHOVER PARISH COUNCIL

## WORKING AT HEIGHT POLICY

### **SUMMARY**

The Health and Safety Executive reports that falls from height remain the biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injuries. There are three main hazards: people falling, falling objects and falls from collapsing structures.

There are many instances where people need to work at height. For example, using stepladders to gain access to high storage or put items away.

The Work and Heights Regulation came into effect on 6 April 2005 and placed responsibilities on duty holders to manage the risks involved of working at heights and ensure that all appropriate equipment is selected for the activity.

This Policy highlights the procedures which will be undertaken to manage the risk of working at height.

### **Statutory Instruments**

Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974

Working at Heights Regulations 2005

### **Approved Codes of Practice & Guidance Notes**

INDG412 - Warehousing and Storage – Keep it Safe

INDG401 (rev 1) – The Work at Heights Regulations 2005 (as amended)

### **PURPOSE**

Ashover Parish Council has a responsibility to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone from falling and ensure compliance with the Working at Heights Regulations 2005.

Glossary of Terms used in the Policy

“A place” - is (at height) if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.

“Work” - includes moving around at a place of work but not travel to or from a place of work.

### **Parish Clerk and Chairman’s Responsibilities**

To ensure that:-

1. Work at height is avoided if possible ensuring that no work is done at a height if it is safe and reasonably practical to do it other than at height.
2. A Risk Assessment is carried out under Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (A detailed Risk Assessment will be carried out accordingly).
3. Any work carried out at height is properly planned, and when required appropriately supervised and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable to prevent any persons falling a distance liable to cause injury.
4. Should there be adverse weather conditions which would endanger health or safety, the work will be postponed at the Parish Clerk’s discretion.
5. Everyone involved in the work is competent, and has been trained. This includes anyone involved in the organisation, planning, supervision and supply of maintenance equipment. It should be noted that the place where work is to be completed at height is safe and all necessary features have been included to prevent a fall.
6. Any equipment for work at height is suitable selected and appropriately inspected (a maintenance record will be provided for the equipment).
7. If working on the roof is required, all relevant risk assessments of the contractors will be checked and agreed by the Parish Clerk before the commencement of any work.
8. No person will go onto or near a fragile surface unless that is the only reasonably practicable way to carry out the work safely. If that is the case then a separate Risk Assessment will be carried out under suitable control measures put in place prior to work commencing.
9. Appropriate warnings will be put in place to prevent anyone working under their control going onto or near a fragile surface as part of the risk assessment.

10. All risks that might be possible from falling objects should be properly controlled.
11. Access is prevented and are affected clearly signed, while there is risk of a person either falling or being struck by a falling object.
12. If a ladder is to be used for any work at height, an individual risk assessment will be carried out to demonstrate that the use of more suitable work equipment is not possible or justified (see individual risk assessments and inspection report of a place involving work at height).
13. Should contractors be employed who will be working at height, their arrangements must be reviewed. This includes requesting, and monitoring safety method statements and risk assessments, and ensuring adequate business insurance, before allowing the work to commence.

### **Employee Responsibilities**

#### **All employees must ensure that they:-**

1. Report to the Parish Clerk any activity or fault relating to work at height, which is likely to endanger themselves or another person.
2. Use any equipment or safety device applied for work at height properly.
3. Comply with any training and instructions.
4. Failure to comply with any policy, or instruction will result in the Parish Council's disciplinary process being implemented, and could lead to termination of employment.

### **Risk Assessment**

1. When any work at height is undertaken, a risk assessment should be undertaken in order to identify what the hazard is and the degree of risk present. This should highlight what could cause harm to people as a result of the activity.
2. When carrying out the risk assessment, consideration should be given to the following points:-
  - The work activity;
  - The equipment to be used;
  - The duration of the work;
  - The location where the work activity is due to take place;
  - The work environment, e.g. whether conditions, time of day and lighting;
  - The condition of workability work surfaces, e.g. step ladders
  - Physical capabilities of the individual.
  - Competency of the persons undertaking the work, e.g. ensuring that they are competent and were appropriately trained in the safe use of the equipment provided.
3. Selection of the Equipment.
  - It is noted that the Work at Height Regulations 2005 has not banned the use of ladders. However, they can be used where the use of other forms of equipment is not appropriate or practical. It should be noted that ladders will only be used where the risk is low and when the work is for a short duration. However, the Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires that if ladders are required to be used should be justified by a separate risk assessment. Where this is the case, an individual risk assessment will be carried out with regard to the use of ladders.
  - It should also be noted that where there is a particular high risk, for example when moving and using scaffolding. A specific risk assessment to justify using the ladders will be carried out for each task where it would be required.
  - It should be noted that ladders will be secured so they cannot slip, usually by tying them at the top, securing the base against an immovable object, or using an effective anti-slip or other effective stability device at the bottom of the ladder.

### **Safe use of steps, ladders and scaffold towers.**

1. Any stepladders or ladders must be fit for the purpose (Class 1 industrial grade ladder or to EN131 Light Trade, not carrying excessive weights).
  - It should be noted all equipment is subject to routine inspection. However, before each ladder is use and each one will be checked to ensure they are kept in good condition. It should be noted that any damaged or repaired ladders or equipment will not be used;

- If step ladders are to be used at low level they must be positioned correctly on a level stable ground and opened to the extent of the retaining bar. It should be noted that if possible the steps should be set at a right angle to the workface and where possible consideration given to the use of platform ladders in the alternative;
- It should be noted further that stepladders should not be placed where they can be dislodged or struck by traffic and doors;
- It should also be noted that the users knees should remain below the top of the steps.
- Both feet shall remain on the rungs.
- For ladders, it should be ensured that they are positioned at a 75° angle on a firm and level base evenly supported on both sides;
- Rungs should be kept free from mud;
- Boots should be cleaned before use;
- It should be noted that rungs should not be used to support boards for access. Intermediate landing places should be provided on a scaffold to ensure a maximum ladder height of 6 metres;
- Only one person at any time;
- Ladders should be tied off at all times where possible;
- If at all possible the ladders should be maintained with three points of contact with the ladder (two feet – one hand or two hands – one foot should be in contact with the ladder at all times);
- The ladder should not be rested against any fragile surface or fitting;
- Scaffold towers should not be moved when someone is occupying them;
- Other lifting equipment should be used rather than carrying bulky items up a ladder;
- If light tools are to be carried they should be carried in a shoulder bag and/or a belt;
- At no time should a person on the ladder overreach as this may lead to overbalancing; and
- Ensure equipment is stored securely when not in use.

### **Maintenance and inspection**

1. It should be noted that all portable access equipment (ladders, scaffolding, stepladders, mobile towers etc) must be checked regularly. Records of checks must be kept including records of repairs.

The records should have:-

- a. Dates of inspection
- b. What type of equipment was inspected
- c. Who carried out the inspection
- d. Any follow up action e.g. repairs required
- e. Date of any repairs carried out and who did them

### **Training**

1. The Parish Clerk must ensure that training, information and personal protective equipment is supplied to the staff, who, in carrying out their jobs may have to work at height. The Parish Clerk is responsible for appropriate training in awareness and safe working procedures.

Training is available for the safe use and maintenance of access equipment such as mobile towers, ladders and stepladders.

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