

Working at Height Policy

Falls from height are the main cause of death in the workplace, for those who regularly use access equipment, falls from height is one of the main risks you face every day, you can use this policy to help you make sure you, and the people you work with, know how to use your access equipment safely.

Planning the Work

It is vital to plan the work properly before working at height commences. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 set out a hierarchy that you must follow when you are planning work at height. The first thing to look at is can the work be done without working at height, if this cannot be achieved, look at what you can do to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall. A net or air bag system could do this. Where there is still a risk of a worker falling and injuring themselves, you must look at what other measures can be taken to reduce this risk.

ICH will ensure all work at height is properly planned and organised including emergencies and rescues as appropriate.

Ladders and Stepladders

Common causes of ladder falls:

- Over reaching.
- Ladder in poor condition.
- Ladder not suitable for the work.

Is the ladder right for the job?

- Is the job low risk?
- Is the work short duration?
- Is a stability device or stand off required?

Is your ladder up to the job?

- Is it long enough to reach the work easily?
- Can it be placed securely on the surface?
- Can you maintain three points of contact?
- Can the ladder be set up at the right angle?
- Is the surface it is leaning on secure?
- Is it of the right classification (trade/industrial)?

Is your ladder in good condition?

- Check stiles, rungs or steps.
- Check the feet, are they missing, loose, damaged or worn.
- Are rivets in place and secure?
- Check locking bars are not bent or buckled (stepladders).

Do you know how to set up your ladder?

- Do you know the correct angle?
- Do you know how to use any stability devices?
- Can you secure or tie the ladder at the top or bottom?

Using the ladder safely

- Make sure there are three points of contact available.
- Do not over reach.
- If you need to carry tools and equipment, make sure you do this safely.
- Make sure you know the maximum safe loads on the ladder.
- Always position the ladder to face the work.
- Make sure any locking bars are in the proper position.
- Wear the right footwear and make sure the soles are clean.
- Footing the ladder, do you know how best to do it and that it is the last option.
- Working near people and near doors, do you know what needs to be done to keep safe.

Union Bridge Works
Roker Lane
Pudsey
Leeds
West Yorkshire
LS28 9LE

Tel: 0844 576 8375
Fax: 0844 576 8376
www.ich-services.co.uk

Company Registered in England No. 2745893

- Take care when carrying ladders, ensure no obstacles can be struck such as fluorescent lights, walk the planned route first and use two people if necessary.
- Do not make or take phone calls while working at height, return or make calls when safe to do so at ground level, if photos of equipment etc. are required, a mobile phone can be used if safe to do so.

Looking after your ladder.

- You need to be able to identify each ladder you have.
- You need to store your ladder safely.
- You need to transport your ladder safely.
- Keep the rungs clean, so they don't become slippery.

Podium

Common causes of falls from podiums and tower scaffolds

- The barrier or gate is not closed or locked and the worker slips or trips and falls through gap.
- The worker misses a step or slips on accessing or getting down from the podium.
- The podium or tower overturns because it is not set up on a firm surface or levelled properly.
- The podium or tower overturns because of overreaching or pulling/lifting a heavy object.

Is a podium or tower right for the job?

- Is there a firm, level surface or if not level, can the equipment be levelled effectively?
- Is the height of work right for the podium or tower?

Can you get a podium or tower to the work area?

- Are there height, width and weight restrictions?

Is your podium or tower right for the job?

- Can you get to the work area easily?
- Is the podium or tower stable?

Is your podium or tower in good condition?

- Check the wheels are secure.
- Check the welding on the staging and guard rails.
- Check the platform and trapdoor on the tower.
- Check any rivets are in place and are not damaged.
- Can the gate on the podium be closed securely?
- Check the braces are in good condition and not bent or corroded.
- Check the brace claws work properly.

If you use a tower of over 2 metres on a construction site, it must be inspected when it is in position or every 7 days.

Do you know how to set up your tower scaffold?

- Only PASMA trained operatives to build mobile towers.
- Ensure that the manufacturer's instructions are delivered with the tower and are followed.
- Are you using a recognised method to build the tower, through the trap or advanced guard rail system?
- Are all the wheels or feet all in contact with a firm surface?
- Are all of the brace claws and knuckle joints in position and locked securely?
- Are the wheels locked and turned 90° to the work face?
- Are outriggers required?
- Do you know the safe working height of the tower? Refer to the manufacturer's manual.
- Do you know how to adjust the platform height?
- Can the work be accessed without over reaching?
- Mi towers supplied by HSS are a one person build tower, the instructions specific to building this tower must be followed.

Do you know how to set up your podium?

- Are all the wheels or feet all in contact with a firm surface?
- Is the podium positioned to face the work area?
- Are all of the brace claws and knuckle joints in position and locked securely?

- Are the wheels locked and turned 90° to the side of the podium?
- Do you know how to adjust the platform height?
- Can the work be accessed without over reaching?

Using the tower or podium safely

- Can you get in and out of the platform safely?
- Put tools and materials onto the podium from ground level where possible.
- Always close and lock the gate or trap before starting work.
- Do not lean or climb on the guard rails.
- Do not move the tower or podium with a worker on it.

- Wear the right footwear and make sure the soles are clean.
- Before moving the tower, reduce it to a maximum height of 4 meters.
- Before moving, check for overhead hazards.

Looking after your tower or podium

- Store it safely.
- Transport it safely.
- Keep locks and wheels in good condition.
- Keep steps or rungs clean so they don't become slippery.
- Keep braces in good condition.

Scaffolding

Where you have to work on scaffolding (not erecting or dismantling it, only trained and competent scaffolders should undertake this work), you need to know the following:

Common cause of falls from scaffolds

- Incomplete guard rails leaving a gap in the edge protection from where the worker can fall.
- Missing or broken boards mean that a worker could fall through the boarding.
- Unsecured ladder or stairwell access onto the scaffolding can cause falls.
- A loading bay gate is not fitted and a worker falls from the unprotected edge.
- Modifications to the scaffold being made by those who are not competent.
- Lack of hand hold at the transition point onto the scaffold if a short ladder is used.

Using scaffold safely

- You should never adjust scaffolding.
- You should be aware that a scaffold must be inspected before use to make sure it is safe and then weekly or after alterations or damage, you should not use it if inspections have not been carried out.

There should be safe access to the scaffold, this is a minimum of a tied ladder with three rungs projecting over the platform to provide a hand hold.

Vertical (scissor) lifts.

Common causes of falls from scissor lifts

- Guard rails are used to climb on and the worker falls over the top guard rail.
- The worker misses a step or slips on accessing or getting down from the scissor lift.
- The lift overturns because it is not set up on a firm or level surface.
- The lift overturns because of overreaching or pulling/lifting a heavy object.

Other safety issues

- Workers getting trapped between the guard rail and ceiling or other structure above.
- People getting trapped in the mechanism as the lift is descending.

Is a vertical lift right for the job?

- Is the surface firm and level?
- Is the height of the work right for the vertical lift?
- Can you get your vertical lift to the work area easily?
- Can the outriggers be properly deployed and give the stability required?
- Will the vertical lift damage the flooring?
- Is your vertical lift light enough for floor loadings?

Is your vertical lift in good condition?

- Check the wheels and/or outriggers are in good condition and working properly.
- Check the working platform.
- Check the guard rails and the gate or barrier.
- Check the struts for corrosion and bends.
- Check the controls, make sure they work as expected.
- Check the fluid and/or battery charge levels.
- Check that the descent alarm and horn is working.
- Check the emergency or ground controls are working properly.

Using the vertical lift safely

- Only get in and out of the platform when it is lowered fully.
- Put tools and materials onto the platform from ground level or use a tool belt.
- Wear the right footwear and make sure the soles are clean.
- Make sure that the barrier or gate is closed and secured before raising the lift.
- Do not climb or lean on the guard rails.
- Make sure that no one can be trapped by the struts when the lift is in operation.
- Make sure that traffic cannot come into contact with the lift.

Looking after your vertical lift.

- Store it safely.
- Transport it safely.
- Keep outriggers in good condition.
- Keep metal struts and guard rails in good condition.
- Keep batteries charged.

Boom type lifts (cherry pickers)

Common causes of falls from cherry pickers

- Guard rails are used to climb on and the worker falls over the top guard rail.
- The worker misses a step or slips on accessing or getting down from the cherry picker.
- The cherry picker overturns because it is not set up on a firm or level surface.
- The cherry picker overturns because of overreaching or pulling/lifting a heavy object.
- Locking pins or joints fail and the platform falls.
- Another vehicle hits the cherry picker and it overturns.

Other safety issues

- Trapping workers between the guard rail and ceiling when working indoors.
- Trapping people in the mechanism as the cherry picker is descending.

Is a cherry picker right for the job

- Is the surface firm and level?
- Is the height of the work right for the cherry picker?
- Can you get your cherry picker to the work area easily?
- Will the cherry picker damage the flooring?
- Is your cherry picker light enough for floor/surface loadings?

Is your cherry picker in good condition?

- Check the wheels are in good condition and the brakes are working properly.
- Check the working platform, is it in good condition.
- Check the guard rails and the gate or barrier.
- Check the locking pins and joints for corrosion or damage.
- Check the struts for corrosion and bends.
- Check the controls, make sure they work as expected.
- Check the fluid and/or battery charge levels.
- Check the outriggers and feet.
- Check that the descent alarm and horn is working.
- Check the emergency or ground controls are working properly.

Using the cherry picker safely

- Only get in and out of the platform when it is lowered fully.
- When do you need to use outriggers.
- Put tools and materials onto the platform from ground level or use a tool belt.
- Wear the right footwear and make sure the soles are clean.
- Make sure that the barrier or gate is closed and secured before raising the lift.
- Do not climb or lean on the guard rails.
- A harness with a short work restraint lanyard provides the most suitable form of personal fall protection.
- Make sure no tools or materials fall from the platform.
- Make sure that traffic cannot come into contact with the cherry picker.
- Only manoeuvre the cherry picker on rough terrain or gradients when the platform is lowered.
- Make sure that no one can be trapped by the struts when the lift is in operation.
- Operative is to read and follow the rescue plan.

Note: If using a client as the nominated ground person in the rescue plan, they must be trained in the use of all normal and auxiliary lowering controls.

Looking after your cherry picker

- Store it safely.
- Transport it safely.
- Keep locks and wheels in good condition.
- Keep metal struts and guard rails in good condition.
- Keep the batteries charged.

Working Above or Near a Suspended Ceiling

Any work platform or gantry must have safe access and egress to and from it, the platform must be made from a substantial material, i.e. a non fragile material and it must have permanent perimeter guard rail or a purpose anchor point to attach a lanyard and harness.

If there is a risk of tools/equipment falling through the ceiling, the area below must be cordoned off.

Before starting work from a platform carry out the following checks;

- Is the Access method safe
- Are there any visible defects
- Are hand rails in place and are they in good condition
- Can you complete the job from the platform – e.g. not over reaching etc
- Adequate lighting
- Any obstructions – overhead pipes, trunking, conduits etc

Note;

If there is any doubt about the safety of any working at height, the operative is advised to contact their line manager or health & safety manager.

Neil Blenkin

Managing Director

1st March 2019

