



Working at height

The way you manage work or access at height needs to be proportionate to your particular circumstances. We appreciate that your premises is not a factory or a building site and is comparatively a low risk environment.

However, we would ask you to check that this work (however minor) or access at height is properly planned **in advance**. This is to ensure that it is carried out in a safe manner, with all necessary precautions being taken.

Making a start

Action	Guidance
<p>1. Identify circumstances where work or access at height may be required.</p> <p>Make a note of these.</p>	<p>If you have completed formal risk assessments, these should have done this for you.</p> <p>The purpose of these risk assessments is to check that you have complied with your responsibilities under health and safety law. As such, they should identify when and how this applies to you, including any precautions you will need to take.</p> <p>In particular, they should show that where ladders are to be used this is justified. Normally, this would be because of the low risk associated with the work and the short duration of their use or there are existing features at your premises that cannot be altered.</p> <p>In most circumstances, your assessments should be recorded, reviewed and updated where you suspect that they are no longer valid.</p>

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Action	Guidance
<p>2. Where work or access at height is required, check the precautions you have taken are adequate. If they are not, identify any additional ones that are needed.</p> <p>Pay particular attention to the precautions for the safe use of ladders or stepladders.</p> <p>Make a note of the precautions in place and/or any additional ones that might be required. Also, note who will be responsible for taking them.</p>	<p>Again, where you have completed formal risk assessments, these will do this for you. They will also provide a useful record of the steps you have taken to identify any necessary precautions.</p> <p>Where practicable, it is better to avoid working at height (e.g. completing the work from ground level using extendable tools).</p> <p>If this is not possible, you should prevent falls by using an existing place that is already safe (e.g. stable with safe access and fixed edge protection) or the right type of equipment (e.g. scaffolds, ladders, stepladders etc.).</p> <p>If this isn't an option either, you should minimise the distance and consequences of a fall by using other equipment, e.g. safety nets, harnesses etc. You should give collective protection measures (e.g. nets) priority over personal protection (e.g. harnesses).</p>
<p>3. Ensure that the precautions you have identified are taken and remain in place for as long as is necessary.</p> <p>Make a note of any checks or inspections you make to ensure these precautions are being taken or equipment remains safe.</p>	<p>You may have to take special precautions and carry out inspections in certain circumstances (e.g. where you use scaffolds; fall arrest systems; ladders; stepladders etc.).</p> <p>You may also need other precautions to guard against falling materials or objects; prevent unauthorised access to work areas; ensure safe access; use lifting equipment; provide adequate lighting; ensure safety around overhead services and/or equipment; ensure the correct use of personal protective equipment etc.</p> <p>If using ladders or stepladders make sure they are the right type for the job and that those using them know how to do so safely.</p>
<p>4. Avoid the need for work on or near fragile surfaces – including roof lights.</p>	<p>Where this is not possible identify and implement adequate precautions to prevent falls (e.g. by providing suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails, roof ladders, crawling boards, warning signs etc.).</p>
<p>5. Ensure that no work at height is carried out when weather conditions make the work or access unsafe.</p>	
<p>6. Ensure that employees and volunteers are provided with any necessary information, training or supervision if this is appropriate.</p> <p>Make a note of any information or training that is provided, particularly in relation to the use of ladders and stepladders.</p>	<p>The level of information and training required will vary depending on the nature of the work and your particular circumstances. If you have completed formal risk assessments, these will help you determine what will be necessary.</p> <p>For most premises, tasks are usually low-risk and of short duration (less than 30 minutes). Frequently, they will involve the use of ladders or stepladders. Here, making sure employees and volunteers receive simple instruction on how to use the equipment safely would be sufficient. However, where more sophisticated equipment (e.g. a mobile access tower or scaffold) is to be used then more specialist training will be required.</p>

Action	Guidance
<p>7. Document your arrangements and responsibilities for managing work at height.</p> <p>Review these where necessary, particularly if you suspect that they are no longer valid.</p> <p>Retain records of the notes you have made in steps 1, 2, 3 and 6.</p>	<p>If you have prepared a health and safety policy, record these as part of it.</p> <p>In the event of a claim, paperwork will be important. So, for work at height, you should retain the records mentioned. Where you prepare other documentation you should keep these as well. This could include information gathered at the scene of the accident (e.g. sketches/photographs; witnesses statements); investigation documents (e.g. accident book); or specific health and safety documents (e.g. risk assessments; records of maintenance, inspections and other checks; records of information and training provided; policy etc.).</p>

Want to know more?

Where you have employees, including volunteers, you are required to comply with health and safety law. Where this is the case, you will need to understand any specific regulations or guidance that may apply in your particular circumstances. For work at height, the key references are:

- The Work at Height Regulations, A brief guide, INDG 401(rev 2), HSE, available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf
- Safe use of ladders and stepladders, A brief guide, INDG 455, HSE, available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf

Further useful resources are available at www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm

Risk advice line

(provided by Ecclesiastical professionals or external specialists)

Phone: **0345 600 7531**

Email: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

Risk specialists are on hand to advise you on a range of topics, including:

- property protection, security, business continuity planning
- health and safety, food safety, environmental management
- construction safety, fire safety, occupational health, water safety or asbestos.

Available Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (excluding public and bank holidays).

For further information speak to your insurance advisor or call us on **0345 60 20 999**

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