

WHS OP011 (Interim) Work at Height Procedure

Section 1 - Overview

(1) Falling from height or being hit by falling objects or falling through, or from, roofs or unsuitable work platforms can result in permanent incapacity or even fatality. The risk of a fall may occur where work is being conducted:

- a. in or on an elevated workplace from which a person may fall;
- b. in the vicinity of an opening through which a person could fall;
- c. in the vicinity of an edge over which a person could fall;
- d. on a surface through which a person can fall; or
- e. In any other place from which a person can fall.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all UNE Representatives but is of particular application for UNE Representatives undertaking construction, maintenance, farm work or working on archaeological exploration sites.

Section 3 - Procedure

Principles

(3) So far as is reasonably practicable the University will ensure that any work that involves the risk of a fall is carried out on the ground or on a solid construction.

(4) Working on roofs has been identified as a high risk activity for both staff and contractors. All persons working on roofs shall be regarded as competent and shall have had sufficient training.

(5) It is the ultimate goal of the University to provide anchor points and/or permanent walkways on all roofs or roof spaces which need to be accessed. This is a long term goal and may take some time to achieve. In the meantime, the University intends to effectively manage those risks associated with working at height and minimise the potential for harm to occur.

(6) When work at height activities are planned consultation on work at height needs to take place as early in the process as possible.

(7) Consideration shall be given to whether work at height can be eliminated or if the task can be redesigned to minimise the amount of time spent working at height.

(8) Supervisors must ensure that persons whose judgement may be, or appears to be impaired by alcohol and drugs are not permitted to work at height.

(9) To avoid the risk of electrocution, work near overhead power lines can only be carried out where staff have been

trained; have been provided with training and suitable equipment; safe work procedures are documented; and suitable ladders and adequate protection are provided.

(10) Signage and other administrative controls shall consider the needs of vision impaired persons.

(11) Only Competent Persons are permitted to conduct Work at heights.

Harnesses and Fall Arrest

(12) All harnesses must be inspected prior to use and results logged in a maintenance record sheet.

(13) At least two persons must be present at all times, if a fall arrest system is used.

(14) Unless the worker is wearing a pole strap or fall arrest system not attached to the ladder, the "three point of contact "applies when working on a ladder.

(15) All harnesses, fall arresting/travel restricting systems, ladders, safety footwear and associated equipment must comply with the current Australian Standards.

Risk Assessment

(16) A documented risk management approach will be used to ensure safety while working at heights of over 1.5 metres.

(17) All workers planning to work at height must document their risk assessment and safe work method. Generic risk assessments may be used.

(18) Supervisors must review risk assessments and any measures adopted to control the risk whenever there is a significant change proposed at the place of work or work at height practices or procedures.

(19) Risk assessments may be amended, if on-site conditions change or if an alternative method is required.

(20) UNE Representatives shall inspect the workplace where the work at height will take place and identify all hazards. Records shall be checked to identify any previous injuries or dangerous occurrences related to falls associated with similar work at height tasks and activities.

Work Platforms

(21) A stable work platform must be provided for any work at height.

(22) Guardrails on work platforms, including scaffolding, should be between 900-1100mm above the working surface and have a top rail, mid-rail and a toe-board or include an infill panel which incorporates a kick-plate.

(23) Platforms used in conjunction with a trestle ladder must have a minimum width of 450mm and must be supported across their entire width.

(24) Provision must be made for a safe means of movement between different levels when working at height.

Ladders

(25) All ladders must be:

- a. used only for the purposes for which they have been designed;
- b. manufactured for industrial use;
- c. have a load rating of at least 120 kg;

- d. erected on a stable surface;
- e. placed at an angle of approximately 70 degrees when in use; and
- f. Prevented from moving while in use.

(26) Stiles of ladders must extend at least one metre above the stepping off point.

(27) Metal ladders or wire bound ladders must not be used near power lines.

(28) Conditions of stepladder use require that:

- a. workers must not stand on the top two steps of a stepladder unless an appropriately guarded working platform is incorporated in to the ladder design;
- b. work requiring the simultaneous release of both hands may only be carried out if the height is below 1.5 metres and does not require over reaching or cause fatigue; and
- c. Both hands must be used to grip the step ladder when ascending and descending.

(29) All tools must be used and supported in a manner that does not affect the centre of gravity of the user.

(30) Leaning towards the ladder is permitted as it does not adversely affect the centre of gravity.

Theatre and Sporting Activities

(31) Legislation (CI 79 [WHS Regulation 2011](#)) provides some exemptions for specific requirements to minimise the risk of fall. These exemptions apply to the following work:

- a. the performance of stunt work;
- b. the performance of acrobatics;
- c. a theatrical performance;
- d. a sporting or athletic activity; and
- e. horse riding.

(32) It is expected, however, that stage crew working at height will be able to provide evidence of working at height training.

(33) Staff involved with work at height in drama and theatre activities must comply with Australian Entertainment Industry Guidelines.

(34) Staff supervising sporting or leisure activities involving the potential for falls from height must ensure compliance with the Health & Safety for Artificial Climbing Structures and Operations Code of Practice 2002 and the Australian Adventure Activity Standards.

Cleaning

(35) Safe work procedures must be followed when carrying out housekeeping tasks which have the potential for falling objects or falls from height, e.g. cob webbing, cleaning windows, blinds, gutter cleaning.

(36) A suitable work-platform must be used when carrying out minor tasks, e.g. painting, trimming ivy.

(37) Light bulbs situated at a height of over two metres must be replaced by competent persons.

Roof spaces

(38) A permit must be issued prior to entry to roof spaces which do not comply with access requirements of AS 1657

or UNE design standards.

(39) Roof spaces which have the potential of atmospheric contamination and are not naturally ventilated must be considered as confined spaces.

Roofs

(40) A permit is required from Estate and Built Environment in order to gain access or undertake work on the roof of any University building.

(41) The general information data provided in the University or workplace roof register must be considered when assessing the level of risk posed by any roof related activity and deciding on suitable controls.

(42) No routine roof maintenance work will be carried out during adverse weather conditions (e.g. high winds, wet, frost covered).

(43) Fall prevention or fall arrest controls must be used when working within two metres of a roof edge which has no perimeter protection.

(44) All footwear used while working on roofs must have a non-slip tread pattern.

Training

(45) A certificate of competency is required for the design or erection of scaffolding over 4 metres in height.

(46) Doggers, riggers, crane operators, hoist operators and operators of other plant used for working at height must have relevant certification.

(47) All staff using fall arrest devices must be trained in the assembly and use of the system.

(48) All staff working on roofs, which do not have permanent walkways or full perimeter fencing, must have received training in the use of harnesses, ropes and accessories

Special conditions for Contractors

(49) All tender documents will require that contractors supply risk assessment and safe work method statements for proposed work at height.

Authority and Compliance

(50) The Director People and Culture, pursuant to the University's [Workplace Health and Safety Rule](#), makes these Procedures.

(51) UNE Representatives must observe these Procedures in relation to University matters.

(52) These Procedures operate as and from the Effective Date.

(53) Previous Procedures relating to working at height are replaced and have no further operation from the Effective Date of this new Procedure.

Section 4 - Definitions

For the purposes of this document the following definitions apply.

(54) Consultation on work at height means sharing information, giving workers reasonable opportunity to express their views and taking those views into account before making decisions on work at height activities.

(55) Competent Person means a person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task.

(56) Reasonably practicable, means that which is, or was at a particular time, reasonably able to be done in relation to ensuring health and safety, taking into account and weighing up all relevant matters including:

- a. the likelihood of the hazard or the risk concerned occurring;
- b. the degree of harm that might result from the hazard or the risk;
- c. what the person/s concerned know/s, or ought reasonably to know about the hazard or the risk;
- d. ways of eliminating or minimising the risk;
- e. the availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise the risk; and
- f. After assessing the extent of the risk and the available ways of eliminating or minimising the risk, the cost associated with risk, including whether the cost is grossly disproportionate to the risk.

Status and Details

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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"UNE Representative" - Means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

"Effective Date" - means the Rule/Policy takes effect on the day on which it is published, or such later day as may be specified in the policy document.