

Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Protocols

Document Details		
Title	Working at Heights Policy	
Trust Ref No	2296-86660	
Local Ref (optional)	N/A	
Main points the document covers	The purpose of this policy is to define the duties in relation to the Trust's Health and Safety policy with regard to working at heights.	
Who is the document aimed at?	All Managers and all staff	
Owner	Health and Safety Advisor	
Approval process		
Who has been consulted in the development of this policy?	This procedure has been developed by the Health and Safety Team and discussed at both the Health & Safety Working Group, and Health and Safety Committee.	
Approved by (Committee/Director)	The Health and Safety Committee 17 th January 2024.	
Approval Date	17/01/2024	
Initial Equality Impact Screening	Yes	
Full Equality Impact Assessment	N/A	
Lead Director	Director of Governance	
Category	Health and Safety	
Subcategory	Working at Heights	
Review date	17 th January 2027	
Distribution		
Who the policy will be distributed to	All Managers	
Method	Via safety alert and published on the Intranet	
Keywords	Ladders, step ladders, heights	
Document Links		
Required by CQC	None	
Other	None	
Amendments History		
No	Date	Amendment
1	November 2023	New procedure
2		
3		
4		
5		

Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Scope	3
3.	Responsibilities.....	3
4.	Training	6
5.	Definitions.....	6
6.	Risk Assessments	6
7.	Assessing the Risks of Working at Height.....	8
8.	Reducing the Risks of Objects Falling From Height	9
9.	Step Ladders	10
10.	Leaning Ladders	10
11.	Inspections of Equipment.....	11
12.	Kick Stool Safety.....	12
13.	MOBILE Elevated Work Platforms (MEWP).....	12
14.	Access Scaffolds	14
15.	Mobile & Free-Standing Tower Scaffolds	14
16.	Safety Harnesses	15
17.	Monitoring and Review	16
18.	Work at height flowchart.....	17

1. Introduction

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 provides a legal framework to protect people where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. The regulations define that a place is “at height” if a person could be injured falling from above, at or below ground level, for example, using a step stool, a step ladder, Mobile Elevating Work Platform, or undertaking roof work/fragile surfaces.

The purpose of this policy is to define the duties in relation to the Trust’s Health and Safety policy with regard to working at heights. The Trust recognises and accepts its responsibility in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974 and subordinate legislation and regulation to provide so far as is reasonably practicable, safe systems of work and a safe place of work.

All reasonably practicable precautions shall be taken by the Trust to provide a safe working environment for employees or contractors / MPFT Trade staff etc who are required to carry out their trade or professional skills at height.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees, and all temporary, agency, contractor, sub-contractor and volunteer staff working on behalf of Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust (SCHT) and on SCHT premises, and sets out the roles, responsibilities and arrangements for the management of risks associated with working at height.

Work at height activities undertaken can include the following:

- Estates Contracted Support – Maintenance: Use of step and leaning ladders, use of mobile elevated working platforms and mobile scaffolds.
- IT – Use of ladders for cable access in ceiling and other voids
- Domestic Services – Cleaning/curtain replacement: Use of step ladders/step stool
- Administration – Access: Medical records and use of step ladders/step stool

Please note, this list is not exhaustive.

3. Responsibilities

Chief Executive Officer

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is ultimately responsible and accountable for the health, safety and welfare of all patients, visitors and employees. The Chief Executive has overall executive responsibility for ensuring that all work at height has effective Health and Safety arrangements in place, and will ensure that Directors, Managers and Employees are aware of, and carry out the roles and responsibilities identified in this policy and its associated procedure.

Trust Secretary / Director of Governance

The Director of Governance has delegated executive responsibility for health and safety and is responsible for the effective implementation of this procedure and that any equipment procured by the Trust to eliminate the risk of working at Heights is safe for use/occupation, allocating sufficient funding to do so.

Associate Director of Estates

The Associate Director of Estates is responsible for ensuring environments requiring working at heights activities are informed, vacated or made appropriately accessible to ensure works can be undertaken in a timely manner.

Ward, Service, Locality and Department Managers including Digital Services

All Ward, Service, Locality and Department Managers **are** responsible for leading on the implementation of this policy by ensuring that any Work at Height activity is properly planned, supervised, and carried out by competent people, and that effective systems are in place to identify, manage and control risks associated when working at height. This responsibility extends to any manager appointing contractors / MPFT Trade staff to carry out work at heights.

Managers must ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments have been carried out and Safe Operating Procedures/Method Statements are in place prior to any works at height commencing and are communicated to the Associate Director of Estates in a timely manner prior to works commencing.

All Managers are responsible for ensuring that the working at height policy is followed and enforced. This shall require inspection, testing and maintenance of equipment at the prescribed intervals. They shall ensure that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are raised and regularly reviewed and that appropriate control measures are in place to minimise the risks identified, further that the assessments are transmitted to all appropriate staff and contractors / MPFT trade staff.

Safe working systems shall accordingly be agreed and implemented. In the event of an incident occurring relating to working at height, all Ward, Departmental and Operational Managers must report immediately via the DATIX incident reporting system.

Managers must also ensure that this policy and the guidance referred to in the following references are transmitted to all persons who work or may work at height:

- *INDG401 (rev2) Published by The Health & Safety Executive "The Work at Height Regulations, A Brief Guide"*
-
- *LA455 Published by the Health & Safety Executive "Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders – a brief guide".*

The above guidance and other information is available at The HSE website www.hse.gov.uk other specific information can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm

All Ward, Departmental and Operational Managers will ensure that all persons (including contractors / MPFT trade staff) required to work at height during the course of their work are suitably assessed and trained.

This will include training in the measures outlined specifically in the Risk Assessment process.

Health and Safety Team

The Trust Health and Safety Team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is reviewed, updated as necessary and implemented. The Health and Safety Team will provide advice on safe working at height in accordance with this policy and current legislation.

Training Department

The Trust's Training Department is responsible for ensuring that all Trust staff who undertake any working from heights activities, will be given training commensurate with their role(s) together with regular refresher training in accordance with the Trust's Organisational Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

All Employees

It is the responsibility of all staff who undertake working at heights activities to:

- Avoid work at height whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- Carry out a pre use check of any equipment for visible damage or defects before use on every day where the equipment is used.
- Immediately take the equipment out of use if it is damaged.
- Ensure that the Work at Height policy is followed and enforced.
- Co-operate and comply with the requirements of this policy, and relevant legislation.
- Not interfere with or misuse any work equipment.
- Report any defect and any unsafe practices.
- Undertake health and safety training where provided and to not undertake any duties not trained for.

All adverse events associated with working at height must be recorded on the DATIX system.

Contractors / MPFT Trade staff

All work undertaken by contractors must only be carried out following approval of relevant risk assessments and method statements detailing how the work will be carried out in a safe manner. Approval must be sought from the Operational/Departmental Manager managing the working at heights activity.

Contractors working on behalf of the Trust must:

- Carry out and provide suitable risk assessments and method statements (RAMS) for any activities requiring work at height. The Appointing manager is to approve the RAMS following formal discussion and retain any documentation in line with approved record keeping standards.
- Work to approved method statements with adequate controls to prevent injury to themselves or others who may be affected by their work.
- Provide suitable maintained access equipment to carry out the required work and check that it has been correctly installed before use and at appropriate periods thereafter.
- Prevent unauthorised entry to access equipment when not in use.
- Report all accidents or near miss incidents to their contact in the Trust.

4. Training

The Trust recognises that training of staff is fundamental to the effective operation of this policy.

All staff will be given training commensurate with their role(s) together with regular refresher training in accordance with the Trust's Organisational Training Needs Analysis (TNA).

To ensure there is equity of access to all aspects of learning and development for all staff employed by the Trust, the Trust has developed a Learning and Development Policy. The training required for the management of working at heights incidents is planned, delivered, and audited in accordance with the Trust Statutory and Mandatory policy and is delivered in accordance with the Learning and Development procedures document. The policy and procedures documents describe how the training needs analysis is undertaken, training is advertised and how attendance at the required training will be monitored and followed up.

5. Definitions

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires employers to ensure:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised.
- All work at height takes into account weather conditions that could endanger the Health and Safety of staff and others who may be affected by SCHAT operations.
- Those involved in work at height are suitably trained and competent.
- The place where work is done is safe.
- Equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected prior to use and after use.
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled; and
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled.

Work at Height can include, but is not exclusively limited to:

- Working at ground level adjacent to an excavation
- Working below ground level
- Working on roofs
- Working on or around fragile surfaces. (Please note that working on or near fragile surfaces must be avoided).
- Working from a ladder/stepladder
- Working from a motorised platform (including vehicle tail lifts)
- Working from scaffolding

Please note that a person is 'at height' if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.

6. Risk Assessments

In the event of working at height being unavoidable, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be completed by Managers. This will identify all the necessary control measures.

Risk assessments may be generic, covering the same task on a number of occasions and in a number of locations, but if there are significant changes to the task, location, personnel or the equipment used then a specific assessment must be completed for that task.

When considering the use of a generic risk assessment the following factors must always be taken into account:

- the task
- equipment used
- competency of the personnel.

These points must always be relevant to the Work / Task being undertaken.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 provides a hierarchy of control measures for determining an appropriate level of control. It is vital that this hierarchy is followed systematically and only when it is not reasonably practicable to introduce the controls must the next level down be considered. It is not acceptable to accept controls from lower down the hierarchy (e.g., step ladders or kick stools) in the first instance. The hierarchy has three basic steps to consider in order:

- Avoid
- Prevent
- Minimise

Hierarchy	General Guidance	Examples
Avoid	Don't work at height unless it's not reasonable to do it another way	Can the work be done from ground level? Can the work be lowered to ground level. Lower shelves. Remove desks from in front of windows to allow access to window opening devices.
Use work equipment or other measures to Prevent falls where working at height cannot be avoided	Can an existing safe place at height be used? Adopt a more suitable method of working. Selection of suitable equipment.	An existing building or structure including its means of access and egress. Tower scaffold Ladders Kick stools.
Where you cannot eliminate a risk of a fall use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences if a fall should occur	Give collective measures priority over personal Mitigate the consequences of a fall. Prevent any person falling a distance liable to cause injury	Landing mats nets

	Have measures in place to arrest a fall	Fall arrest equipment, rope access.
--	---	-------------------------------------

In the event that a generic risk assessment fails to cover the risk associated with the works to be undertaken. A new risk assessment shall be carried out.

7. Assessing the Risks of Working at Height

There are five steps to risk assessment which have to be completed, these are:

- Look for the hazards - things that can cause harm, falling off something or something falling on you.
- Decide who might be harmed and how - whether by falling or something falling on someone nearby.
- Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more must be done - do you need to provide extra edge protection, other equipment or training to reduce the risk.
- Record your findings - make records and keep them up to date.
- Review your assessment and revise it if necessary - if there are any changes, if the weather has worsened or there has been an accident.

You must consider the specific risks posed by working at height as part of your overall health and safety risk assessment.

Consider why the work is being carried out, you may be able to avoid having to carry it out at all, or possibly complete it using alternative working methods.

Evaluate the risk of all falls; take specific precautions to reduce the risks.
Where it's possible for anyone to fall

Your risk assessment must ensure:

- All work at height is properly planned and appropriately supervised
- Those working at height are competent
- The place where work at height is done is safe
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled
- Materials and objects are stopped from fall
- Equipment for work at height is suitable and properly inspected and maintained
- The weather conditions are taken into account and all work is stopped if weather conditions endanger health or safety.
- Procedures in case of emergency are planned for.

Existing structures must be stable, they must support the weight of workers and the equipment or materials they may need. Platforms must be footed on firm ground or on a stable structure to prevent them from moving. For example, scaffolding must be tied to an existing structure. Duckboards must be provided over fragile roofs. Where people could fall through holes or openings in a platform floor guard rails, boards or other barriers such as toe boards must be erected. Your risk assessment must help you to choose the most suitable type of equipment to use.

There are many types of equipment, including:

Tower and general scaffolds.
Mobile and suspended equipment.
Mobile elevating work platforms.

The type of equipment depends on:

The space, nature and duration of the work.
The number of users.
The risks of erecting the structure.

You will need to ensure that all equipment is well maintained and checked regularly. All equipment must be removed from the platform at the end of the working day, and any power supplies must be switched off.

The level of risk shall be taken as that exists after all risk reduction measures have been introduced. The consequence score rating must always remain at 5 as it is foreseeable that fatalities can occur on falls less than 2 metres. The introduction of suitable work equipment and the provision of a competent well trained workforce will have a significant effect on reducing the likelihood score and thus the residual risk score on the quantification of risk on the assessment.

Risk assessments must be reviewed annually or whenever there is significant change in the task, equipment, after an accident or on the introduction of new legislation or guidance.

8. Reducing the Risks of Objects Falling From Height

When people are working at height it is essential to consider the risk of objects falling onto somebody or something below.

Any hand-held equipment such as drills, saws, buckets can be dropped and knocked over the edge of a platform or walkway. Materials such as nails, pieces of wood and debris can also represent a significant hazard.

Key steps to prevent objects falling.

- Platforms must be constructed so that materials or objects can't fall and cause injury to anyone or anything below. Close boarded platforms are usually sufficient.
- For work over public areas, a double-boarded platform with a polythene sheet in between the boards prevents small items such as nails and bolts from falling.
- Toe boards also prevent items from being kicked off the edge of platforms.
- Providing a covered walkway is another way to protect people below.
- If you're using a cradle, harness or mobile elevated working platform (MEWP), mesh or netting can be used underneath the equipment to prevent anything falling and causing injury or damage.
- Covered chutes are an effective and quick method of removing debris from work areas, and much safer than throwing over the side of a platform into a skip below.
- Tools such as drills and trowels can be attached to safety lines - if they're accidentally dropped, the line prevents them falling below the work area.
- Remember that bad weather can cause difficulties for outdoor work, with wind blowing equipment off platforms. If the weather is particularly severe, you may have to postpone work to prevent putting people at risk. Secure or remove all equipment that could be blown off work platforms should the weather change during the night or over a period of absence.

9. Step Ladders

Step Ladders have not been banned in the workplace. The use of step ladders in an office environment can be justified being at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Before considering the use of steps to access items which may be stored in high places priority must be given to the relocation of items into areas in which the use of such steps is not required. This may be on lower shelves. Only when it is reasonably practicable not to achieve this must height access equipment be considered.

If step ladders are to be used providing the user must be trained and instructed in the selection and safe use of the ladders and systems must be in place to ensure step ladders are maintained and inspected every six months. Step ladders do not prevent a fall or mitigate a fall but if used by trained operators in appropriate circumstances i.e. low risk and for short durations, their work can be justified. All departments that have step ladders must operate a ladder register, detailing the date of purchase, date and frequency of maintenance, defects reported, repair work etc. All step ladders must have an identifiable number. All step ladders must be stored correctly. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for methods of safe storage.

When using step ladders ensure the following:

- All four legs are in contact with the ground and the steps are level.
- Place the stepladders with the rungs facing the work activity and not side on as this is less stable.
- Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided, you must prevent the steps from tipping over, e.g. by tying the steps.
- Ensure the ladders are the correct length.
- Do not overreach.
- Do not use the top three (including the top step) rungs of the stepladder unless it has a suitable handrail. Ensure a handhold is readily available.
- Always use appropriate footwear

Wherever ladders or step ladders are in use throughout the Trust, copies of the following documents must be read and understood by all staff using the relevant equipment.

- *INDG401 (rev2) Published by The Health & Safety Executive "The Work at Height Regulations, A Brief Guide"*
- *LA455 Published by the Health & Safety Executive "Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders – a brief guide"*.

All step ladders used by the Trust must be manufactured to the most recent British Standard. Wooden/timber ladders must not be used, rather, fibre glass must be used to protect from electrical conductivity.

These documents can be obtained from HSE Website.

10. Leaning Ladders

It is Trust policy that leaning Ladders must only be used where all other systems of work are impracticable; Ladders are only safe when they rest on a firm, level surface.

Do not place on loose bricks or packing. They must also be secured by rope or other suitable stabilization devices. Such devices must ensure that the ladder does not:

- run sideways; or
- slide away from the wall.

When using ladders, ensure that:

- the ladders are angled to minimise the risk of slipping outwards, i.e., 75° / 1:4;
- the top of the ladder rests against a solid surface.
- both feet of the ladder are on a firm and level ground and cannot slip.
- if the ladder is more than 3m long, or used as a way to and from a workplace, it is secured from falling. This will usually be by fixing at the top, or sometimes the base.

All statutory tests on ladders and their constituent parts shall be carried out within the time scales specified and are correctly recorded and logged. See also equipment inspections The Ward, Department and Operational Managers are also responsible to ensure that complete items or constituent parts that fail such tests are disposed of or destroyed in such a way as to render them unusable.

11. Inspections of Equipment

Access equipment and scaffolds must be inspected and tested on a regular basis and records kept of any such inspections and tests.

Inspections must be carried out:

- By a competent person
- The place where work is to be carried out before it is used.
- The equipment after it is assembled or installed.
- As often as is necessary to ensure safety, and in particular to make sure that any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time. The maximum time between inspections shall not exceed two weeks.
- Before use if coming from another business or organisation and before any equipment leaves the Trust.
- It must be accompanied by a record of the last inspection.
- When any platform used for, or for access to construction work and from which a person could fall shall be inspected in place before use (not more than seven days before use)
- Mobile work platforms, inspection for use on the site an initial inspection is sufficient without re-inspection every time it is moved. Further inspection shall then be carried out as required. The maximum time between inspections shall not exceed two weeks.

All equipment used for working at height must be inspected by a competent person. This inspection must be vigorous as well as visual. Inspections must be carried out on step ladders and kick stools at the following intervals.

- After installation or assembly
- If exposed to conditions likely to cause deterioration.
- After any incident or report of near miss
- After exceptional circumstances which may jeopardise the safety of the equipment.
- Annual check.

A simple visual check can be completed by all users prior to use the simple check is looking for the following defects:

- Missing, damaged or worn anti –slip feet on metal and fibreglass ladders (these are essential for good grip)
- Items stuck in the feet such as swarf, stones grease or dirt preventing the feet from making contact with the ground.
- Mud, grease or oil either on the rungs or the stiles (the slides)
- Cracks in the rungs or stiles of the ladder.
- Missing broken or weakened rungs.
- Missing or damaged tie rods.
- Check metal ladders for cracked or damaged welds and missing or loose screws or rivets.

After the inspection has been completed any concerns regarding the safety of the equipment must be reported immediately to your line manager and the equipment immediately labelled as defective and defective.

12. Kick Stool Safety

The kick stool is a versatile piece of work equipment. Kick stools can provide means of access to high shelves and must only be used when other methods of control have been exhausted i.e., relocation of files on high shelves.

- Before using a kick stool for the first time be aware of how it works. To enable the stool to be relocated, it is based on a number of castors which collapse on to a rubber base ring when any weight is placed on the stool providing a solid platform.
- Inspect every kick stool before use. If there are any defects cracks or damage do not use and decommission the equipment immediately. Take particular notice of the surface to ensure it is free from contaminants such as dirt or fluids.
- Before moving the kick stool be sure there are no obstacles in the path. It is safe to move the kick stool with the foot using a short light kick aimed at the base of the kick stool.
- Ensure the stool is in the right position; minor adjustments can be done by hand.
- Do not attempt to mount a moving kick stool. Once the stool is stationary step firmly up one foot at a time.
- Hold any item to be lifted with both hands making sure you stand in the centre of the stools platform. When you are comfortable reach up to complete the required task.
- Never lift any large or heavy objects, if you are unsure hand any item to a second person before mounting / dismounting the stool.
- Do not over stretch or stand on one foot it is important to keep both feet firmly on the stool at all times.
- Dismount slowly and carefully one foot at a time do not jump off the stool.
- Do not use a kick stool if you are wearing high heel shoes.
- All kick stools must meet the British Standards of BS EN 14183:2003 or BS / EN131.

13. MOBILE Elevated Work Platforms (MEWP)

The equipment's owners must have carried out their own written risk assessment on its use under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 and the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER).

People must not operate a MEWP unless they have been trained and authorised as competent or are undergoing formal training under close supervision. Training must be in accordance with a recognised scheme such as one run by the CITB or the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF).

- The responsibility for providing training lies primarily with the contractor / Trust as the employer but they must be provided with suitable information on the use of MEWPs by the equipment's owners, i.e. the hire company.
- Before being used for the first time on-site, MEWPs must be thoroughly examined by a competent person and a copy of that an report must be made available to the hirer/user
- The maximum number of people that may be carried on the platform and the safe working load must be clearly marked on the platform attachment point.
- Anyone using the MEWP's platform must wear a full body harness in good condition energy-absorbing or inertia-reel lanyard to the current BS EN standards.
- Use of such equipment as a fall restraint system that prevents falls is currently most common. If fall arrest is used (stop someone once they have fallen), then a properly rated anchor point is essential (most and currently rated only for fall restraint).
- The clearance height of the platform must also be considered because, when working below 5 m, an energy-absorbing style lanyard may be too long to stop someone's fall. In all cases consult the maker of the equipment on its suitability.
- A set of operating instructions must be available for use and reference whenever the MEWP is in use.
- The maximum permissible wind speed in which the MEWP may operate or remain raised/extended must be clearly specified.
- The maximum gradient on which a MEWP operate must be clearly marked on the platform and inclinometers must be provided to enable an operator to establish the slope of the ground
- Stabilisers/outriggers must be provided with suitable soleplates for use on soft ground.
- Identify any localised ground hazards such as ducts, manhole covers, holes or voids.
- Ensure no parts of the MEWP can protrude into any areas where vehicles may strike the MEWP.
- The user of the MEWP must make use of the information supplied by the manufacturer to the minimum supporting capacity of the ground needed by the MEWP and the site-specific risk assessment for the activity must take the nature of the working environment into account.
- The person(s) on the platform must be in control of all movements at all times. However if, as in the road vehicle type of chassis-supported MEWPs, where horizontal-travelling controls are at ground level, then there must be a suitable system of communication between platform personnel and the ground controller, e.g. two-way radios or an intercom system.
- Guard-rails at least 920 mm high, with mid-rails or mesh infilling, and toe boards at least 150 mm high, must be provided at the edges of platforms. Alternatively, solid enclosures at least 920 mm high must be provided. Access gates must not open outwards and returned automatically to the closed and fastened position; a vertically sliding section of mid-rail can also be an acceptable means of access.
- The upper surface of the platform must be made slip-resistant and adequate means of attachment for safety harnesses must be provided. Properly secured guard-rails may provide a suitable attachment point.

14. Access Scaffolds

For general access scaffolds, it is a requirement to ensure that:

- it is designed, erected, altered and dismantled by competent people and the work is directed by a competent supervisor;
- it is based on a firm, level foundation. The ground or foundation must be capable of supporting the weight of the scaffold and any loads likely to be placed on it.
- it is braced and tied into a permanent structure or otherwise stabilized;
- it is capable of supporting loads likely to be placed on it;
- platforms are fully boarded and wide enough for the work and for access;
- scaffold boards are properly supported and not overhanging excessively (for example, no more than four times the thickness of the board);
- there is safe ladder or other access onto the work platforms; and
- it is suitable for the task before it is used and checked whenever it is substantially altered or adversely affected by, for example, high winds.

No scaffolding erected by scaffolding contractors shall be used unless a safety certificate has been issued to the contract administrator and/or the Associate Director of Estates. Where scaffolding is erected by contractors or on the behalf of contractors to enable them to carry out works the contractor shall provide a copy of the safety certificate to the contract administrator and/or the Associate Director of Estates.

Once the scaffold has been erected and certified safe, no part of the structure shall be altered by Trust staff. A description of the scaffold will be entered into a register and inspected weekly by the contract administrator and/or the Associate Director of Estates and /or a competent person. In external situation, the scaffolding must be inspected after any adverse weather conditions which may affect the scaffolding.

If any person using the scaffold feels that it is unsafe or is not sure, contact their immediate Supervisor who will inform the contract administrator and/or or the Associate Director of Estates, who will arrange for the scaffolding to be inspected.

Safety harnesses **MUST** be used where it is not practicable to provide a standard working platform or gangway with guard rails and toe boards. If used, the belts must always be worn and always secured to a safe anchorage.

15. Mobile & Free-Standing Tower Scaffolds

Mobile and tower scaffold shall be erected, altered and dismantled by competent people and the work is directed by a competent supervisor; (PASMA Certified)

- it is based on a firm, level foundation. The ground or foundation must be capable of supporting the weight of the scaffold and any loads likely to be placed on it.
- it is braced and tied into a permanent structure or otherwise stabilized;
- it is capable of supporting loads likely to be placed on it;
- platforms are fully boarded and wide enough for the work and for access;
- scaffold boards are properly supported and not overhanging excessively (for example, no more than four times the thickness of the board);
- there is safe ladder or other access onto the work platforms; and it is suitable for the task before it is used and checked whenever it is substantially altered or adversely affected by, for example, high winds.

- The height of the working platform on the above scaffolds must not be more than three times the minimum base width when used outside and three and a half times when used inside (including the out-riggers, if fitted).
- The working platform must be fully boarded and the boards must be at least 38mm (1.5") thick. Guard rails and toe boards are necessary on all four sides with possibly a small break in one side at the stepping off point from the ladder access. Toe boards must be at least 150mm (6") above the platform level. Guard rails must be between 0.914m (3') and 1.143m (3'9") above the platform.
- Mobile scaffolds must only be used on ground which is firm and level. Moving scaffold must only be effected by pulling or pushing at the base. The working platform shall be clear of people and materials when the scaffolding is being moved and its path unobstructed. Also check above for overhead power lines /obstructions.
- The platform must have a safe means of access on the narrowest side of the tower.
- Do not climb the frame unless it has built-in ladder sections with rungs not more than 300mm apart and the stiles not more than 480mm apart. If the frame can be used, climb it from the inside. If not, use internal ladder or stairways fixed firmly to the tower. **NEVER** climb up the outside; this may cause the scaffold to over-turn.
- The wheels must be turned outwards to provide maximum base dimensions and wheel brakes must be **ON** and locked when the scaffold is in use.
- All scaffolding must be inspected by a competent person before being put into use and a record of this inspection.
- If the scaffold is to be in use or left for more than 7 days, a description of the scaffold shall be entered into the prescribed register and the scaffold inspected at least weekly by the appropriate officer.

Towers are not to be used in the following circumstances:

- in strong winds;
- as a support for ladders, trestles or other access equipment;
- with broken or missing parts; or
- with incompatible components.

Moving

When moving a tower you must **always**:

- reduce the height to a maximum of 4m;
- check that there are no power lines or other obstructions overhead;
- check that the ground is firm, level and free from potholes; and
- push or pull using manual effort from the base only.
- **Never** move a tower while people or materials are on the tower, or in windy conditions.

16. Safety Harnesses

Providing a safe place of work, and system of work to prevent falls must always be the first consideration. However, there may be circumstances in which it is not practicable for the requirements for guard rails etc., to be provided.

Where people may still approach an open edge from which they would be liable to fall 2m or more, other forms of protection will be needed. In some cases a suitably attached harness and line could allow safe working.

When using harnesses and lines:

- ALL harness users MUST be trained and certified competent
- Checks must be carried out in accordance with BSEN365:2004
- Check that the harness is manufactured to the relevant BSEN standard to the type of harness
- allow for a free-fall distance of no more than 2m.
- consider how to recover anyone who does fall;
- installation of equipment to which harnesses will be fixed must be supervised by a suitably qualified person; and
- ensure everyone who uses a harness knows how to check, wear and adjust it before use and how to connect themselves to the structure or safety line as appropriate.

17. Monitoring and Review

The monitoring and implementation of the policy will be through the Health and Safety Working Group and Health and Safety Committee. This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, as a minimum, or before as a result of any changes in either the level of risk, legislation or Healthcare Facilities guidance.

18. References

- Control of Contractors Policy - [Shropshire Community Health Service NHS Trust \(shropcom.nhs.uk\)](http://shropcom.nhs.uk)
-

18. Work at height flowchart



