



# Working at Heights Procedure

WHS-PRO-029 Working at Heights Procedure				
Version	Author	Date	Amendments	Expiry Date
02	Various	Mary Darwell (CEO)	May 2019	Full review and update of system
01	Benchmark OHS Consulting	SHFT Executive	August 2017	Original Version

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## PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish and maintain a fall protection program to prevent injuries due to falls which applies to all Sydney Harbour Federation Trust employees and contractors who work at heights at Sydney Harbour Federation Trust facilities and worksites.

## SCOPE

Applies to procedures established which outline the identification of the hazards to which any person (including members of the public) could be exposed as a result of working at heights and these hazards shall be eliminated where reasonably practicable, controlled, or reduced to minimize risks.

## REFERENCES

- AS/NZS 4801:2001 OH&S Management Systems – 4.4.6 Hazard identification, hazard/risk assessment and control of hazards
- WHS Regulation 2011 – Chapter 3 General risk and workplace management, Division 10 Falling objects
- WHS Regulation 2011 – Chapter 4 Hazardous work, Part 4.4 Falls
- Code of Practice – Managing the risk of falls at workplaces
- Code of Practice – Preventing falls in housing construction

## DEFINITIONS

### Fall Protection System

Includes:

- No Go Zone;
- A personal fall arrest system;
- A travel restraint system.

### Personal Fall Arrest System

A system consisting of a full body harness and a lanyard equipped with a shock absorber or similar device.

## FORMS

### Forms

- Scaffold Inspection Checklist
- Scaffold Handover Inspection Certificate
- Scafftag Holder
- Scafftag Inspection Insert

## ACTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Identification

- Project Managers are to identify all locations and tasks that could cause injury due to a fall. This includes access to the areas where work is to be carried out.
- Tasks that need particular attention are those carried out:
  - on any structure or plant being constructed or installed, demolished or dismantled, inspected, tested, repaired or cleaned
  - on a fragile surface (for example, cement sheeting roofs, rusty metal roofs, fibreglass sheeting roofs and skylights)
  - on a potentially unstable surface (for example, areas where there is potential for ground collapse)
  - using equipment to work at the elevated level (for example, when using elevating work platforms or portable ladders)
  - on a sloping or slippery surface where it is difficult for people to maintain their balance (for example, on glazed tiles)
  - near an unprotected open edge (for example, near incomplete stairwells)
  - near a hole, shaft or pit into which a employee could fall (for example, trenches, lift shafts or service pits).

### General Controls

- The Project Manager should identify the adequate protection against the and ensure the provision and maintenance of safe systems of work, including:
  - providing a fall prevention device if it is reasonably practicable to do so, or
  - if it is not reasonably practicable to provide a fall prevention device, providing a work positioning system, or
  - if it is not reasonably practicable to comply with providing a fall arrest system, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- The Project Manger should also ensure the risks to health and safety associated with an object falling on a person and shall minimise the risk of an object falling on a person by providing adequate protection against the risk. This may include:
  - preventing an object from falling freely,
  - if it is not reasonably practicable to prevent an object from falling freely—
  - providing a system to arrest the fall of a falling object for example:
    - Providing a secure barrier.
    - Providing a safe means of raising and lowering objects.
    - Providing an exclusion zone for persons are prohibited from entering.

### Emergency and rescue procedures

- Where a fall arrest system is used as a control measure, the Project Manager shall ensure emergency procedures, including rescue procedures, in relation to the use of the fall arrest system are developed.
- The Project Manager shall ensure that the emergency procedures are tested so that they are effective and that all relevant employees are provided with suitable and adequate information, training and instruction in relation to the emergency procedures.

## Scaffolding

- The Project Manager shall not allow the use of a scaffold from which a person or object could fall more than four metres unless a competent person provides written confirmation that the scaffold has been completed and the Scaffold Handover Inspection Certificate is issued.
- The Project Manager shall ensure the “Scafftag Holder” is attached to the scaffold following Handover/Inspection.
- The Project Manager shall also ensure that:
  - the scaffold and its supporting structure is inspected by a competent person before use, after any incident that could affect its stability (such as a severe storm), after any repairs, and at least every 30 days and recorded on the Scaffold Inspection Checklist
  - the “Scafftag Inspection Insert” shall be completed and inserted into the “Scafftag Holder”.
  - unauthorised access is prevented on scaffolding that is incomplete and left unattended (by attaching the “Scafftag Holder” and warning signs at appropriate locations).
- The Project Manager should ensure:
  - all scaffolding is erected, altered and dismantled by competent persons. Any scaffold from which a person or object could fall more than four metres shall be erected, altered and dismantled by or under the direct supervision of a licensed scaffolder.
  - prefabricated scaffolds are of the same type and not mixed components, unless the mixing of components has been approved by the manufacturer
  - safe access to and egress from the scaffold is provided
  - edge protection (hand rails, mid-rails and toe boards) is provided at every open edge of a work platform.

## Ladders - Inspection

- Project Managers shall ensure all ladders are inspected before use and do not use ladders with faults such as damaged stiles, and missing or loose rungs.
- The inspection is to include checks for:
  - cracks or other damage to the rungs or treads
  - contamination of the rungs or treads with grease, oil or chemicals Cracks or damage to the styles
  - unauthorised repair or modification to any part of the ladder
  - corrosion of any part of the ladder due to chemicals
  - cuts or other damage resulting in metal splinters
  - loose rivets, joints, nuts and bolts
  - damage to hinges
  - damaged or missing feet
  - the condition of ropes.
- Ladders shall be maintained in good condition or removed from service.
- Any defects to ladders or associated safety equipment shall be reported immediately to the Project Manager.

### Ladders – Use

- When ladders are being used, the Project Manager shall ensure:
  - Make sure that the ladder is without defect and is placed securely against a solid backing at a safe angle of 75 degrees and on a solid, level ground.
  - When climbing a Ladder, always have three points of contact (two feet and one hand, or two hands and one foot)
  - Do not carry material and tools by hand when climbing the ladder. Material and tools which cannot be safely secured on the employee's belt are to be independently transferred or hoisted to the work location.
  - Ladders should have a load rating of at least 120 kg and be manufactured for industrial use.
  - The top should extend at least 1 metre above the work level.
  - Never use bricks, timber etc. to stand the ladder on.
  - Never splice two ladders together.
  - Ladders shall not be used as horizontal members for any purpose.
  - Ladders shall be securely lashed when in use on roofs and elevated work.
  - Only one person is allowed on a portable ladder.
  - Step ladders shall not exceed a height of 3 metres.
  - Extension ladders shall not exceed a height of 9 metres.
  - Never stand on the top step.
  - Never use a step ladder as a straight ladder.
  - Do not use the metal ladders or ladders with metal parts when there is a risk or electrical contact.
  - Never move your body outside the vertical stays of the ladder.

### Safety Belts and Harnesses

- A safety belt & harness shall be worn during all work activities carried out at a height when a properly constructed work platform or scaffold is not available, and a properly constructed guardrail is not provided.
- It is not necessary to use a safety belt/harness when walking or climbing on properly constructed walkways and ladders.
- A safety belt/harness shall be worn when working from cherry pickers and other moveable work platforms.
- Equipment to comply with AS/NZS 1891 Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices.
- All safety belts and harnesses used, and all accessory items shall comply with AS 1891. No equipment shall be purchased unless it complies with AS 1891.
- Under no circumstances shall any person make any modifications to safety belts, harnesses, or any accessory items.
- Equipment to be used and maintained to AS/NZS 2626 Industrial safety belts and harnesses standards.
- Safety belts and harnesses can deteriorate when exposed to chemicals, sunlight and other environmental agents. It is important that all equipment is used, maintained and stored in accordance with AS/NZS 2626.

### Moveable work platforms/cherry pickers

- All moveable work platforms shall be used in accordance with supplier instructions and recommendations, and;
- A safety belt/harness shall be worn with the line attached to the work platform.
- Where stabiliser jacks, wheel locks/chocks are provided they shall be used to secure the platform.

### Training

- The Project Manager shall ensure the provision of information, training and instruction to employees, including procedures for emergency and rescue.
- Training should also include:
  - the type of control measures used to prevent falls procedures for reporting fall hazards and incidents the correct selection,
  - fitting, use, care, inspection, maintenance and storage of fall-arrest and restraint equipment
  - the correct use of tools and equipment used in the work (for example, using a tool belt instead of carrying tools) control measures for other potential hazards (for example, electrical hazards).