

Safe Work Practice Sheet	Ref: SWPS	Approved by: Michael S McCaul
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Hazards

Working at Heights.

Working at height means working in a place where you could get injured by falling from a height. This applies where your workplace is at, above or below, ground level. It does not include a staircase in a permanent workplace.

Activities covered by working at height include:

- using a kick stool or stepladder to access overhead shelving
- hanging curtains in bays
- changing lamps or ceiling tiles
- using trestles and ladders to paint or clean
- order picking using a fork-lift truck with an integrated platform
- working on a ladder or scaffold

Person Exposed to Risk

Residents Employees ✓ Public Contractors ✓ Visitors

Work Description Staff involved in working at heights

Health and safety issues.

CAN YOU AVOID WORK AT HEIGHTS? Prior to commencing work at heights, your manager should assess any potential risks. An obvious way to reduce the risk of injury from work at heights is to avoid the need to access high levels, where this is not possible consider the following points below:

- Try to seek alternative locations to avoid the need to store equipment at height.
- If space is limited and storing items at a height is necessary, ensure that only lightweight, infrequently used items are stored on the higher shelves and that they are stacked securely.
- Stepladders or Kick stools should be used for access to higher levels. Furniture such as chairs, beds or desks should never be used.
- If you notice a problem with access or if the equipment is unsuitable for work at heights then you must report the issue to your Line Manager prior to carrying out the specific task.

USING A STEPLADDER DO's and DON'Ts When using a step ladder:

It is important to visually check the stepladder for any signs of damage before use.

If there are any obvious issues, report them to your manager immediately.

Ensure the surrounding area is free from clutter and there is clear access to the steps (or feet) of the stepladder.

The stepladder must rest firmly on the floor without the risk of it slipping or moving during the task.

Always maintain at least 3 points of contact with the ladder (2 feet and a hand or 2 feet and your body).

Always face forwards while using the stepladder and adjust the positioning of the ladder as needed.

If you are concerned regarding your medical fitness to complete a task contact your local Occupational Health Department.

When using a step ladder:

Do not use a step ladder in an area where there is potential to be knocked over (e.g. behind a doorway or on a busy corridor).

Do not twist your body to one side or stretch away from the ladder.

Do not over-reach reach while on a stepladder. This will make your position on the stepladder unstable.

Make sure your waist and hips stay within the vertical uprights and keep both feet on the steps.

VISUAL CHECK ON STEPLADDERS Prior to using a stepladder complete a visual check on the following

1. Safety handrail—ensure it is secure and free from damage
2. . Hinge—check that the hinge fully engages and is free from damage.
3. 3. Step lock—The step lock must be clean and free from damage so that it fully engages and locks into place.
4. 4. Feet Rubber— Rubber feet must be present and free from any damage that may cause the feet to slip when in use.
5. 5. Uprights—Ensure it is free of damage.
6. 6. Steps (Rungs) - Ensure there is no damage and that the rungs are secure. The rubber mats must be firmly in place and secure.
7. 7. Stays - Some stepladders have stays that are attached to the front and back uprights. Ensure they are locked fully into position prior to use.
8. 8. Label—review the label as this may include manufacturers notes regarding use and inspections.
9. KICK STOOLS Kick stools are designed not to move when you apply weight to them however the following points must be considered prior to use: **VISUAL CHECK ON KICK STOOLS**

10. • Ensure wheels are running freely.
11. • Ensure there is no debris on the wheels or steps, and rubber surfaces are stuck down securely.
12. • Check that it locks into position when you put weight onto the kick stool.
13. • Check the rubber on the bottom of the kick stool is free from damage.
14. You should wear appropriate footwear to ensure your stability when using a kick stool and avoid wearing clothes that you could catch your heel on when mounting or dismounting the kick stool.
15. Don't carry items in both hands when standing on the kick stool

Personal protective equipment required (last resort)

Flat non slip shoes.

Initial Risk Rating (without any control measures)

Probability : x Severity = Risk Factor

KEY		
PROBABILITY	SEVERITY	RISK FACTOR
Probable 3	Critical 3	1-3 Low Risk
Possible 2	Serious 2	4 Medium Risk
Unlikely 1	Minor 1	6-9 High Risk
Risk Factor = Probability x Severity		

Risk Reduction Rating (after controls introduced)

Probability : x Severity = Risk Factor

Risk Assessment Review

As and when process changes or yearly.

Additional Information: A Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet for the Use of Kick Stools & Step Ladders at low levels will assist with the risk assessment process for work at heights . More information is available on the Working at Height webpage.