

Procedure: Working at Heights

1. Purpose

Ensure the safety of individuals required to perform any work at height.

2. Actions Required

- Identify all tasks that could involve persons falling or being struck by falling objects
- Conduct risk assessments for all tasks involving working at height
- Implement control actions to eliminate or reduce associated risks
- Ensure appropriate testing, maintenance or use of equipment necessary for working at heights
- Audit and review.

3. Definitions

GSCC - Greater Shepparton City Council

GSCC RO - GSCC responsible officer employee responsible for a process, location or contractor

SWMS - Safe Work Method Statement

WORKING AT HEIGHT - is defined by regulations where a fall of at least 2metres is possible.

4. Responsibility and Authority

Directors

- Ensure an effective OHS management system is developed for workers working above 2 metres
- Ensure adequate consultation with workers regarding health and safety issues
- Delegate appropriate OHS responsibilities and accountabilities to all levels of management.

Managers, Team Leaders, Supervisors and Contractors

- Identify and assess the risks for all potential fall situations
- Risk assessments to be conducted before the commencement of work and at any time the scope of work changes or the risk of a fall increases
- Ensure that risk control measures that have been implemented are effective and additional hazards have not been created
- Provide training and awareness to staff on the dangers involved in working at heights
- Ensure all equipment purchased complies with the relevant Australian Standard and is fit for purpose
- Provide adequate supervision and assistance during working at heights
- Develop SWMS with appropriate control measures for all at height work
- Adhere to all requirements with regard to WorkSafe Notifiable incidents and Dangerous Occurrences
- Ensure appropriate selection, issue, use and maintenance of personal protective equipment
- Ensure all plant, machinery and equipment is maintained and risk assessed
- Ensure workers are placed with responsible personnel and directed to work within their capabilities and supplied with all relevant information instruction and training.

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 1 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

Workers

- Ensure that all working at height tasks are conducted according to appropriate SWMS
- Report any defects or problems with equipment
- Take reasonable care for their own safety and that of others at work
- Obey all instructions from their Supervisors issued to protect their own personal health and safety and that of others
- Report any safety hazards to Supervisors in regard to working conditions or methods of work and not to perform any unsafe acts
- Participate in all provided safety training and awareness programs.

5. Procedure

Where ever possible performing tasks above 2 metres is to be avoided.

GSCC is committed to providing a safe working environment and safe systems of work and to ensure that workers working at heights are protected from any risk of falling, potentially being struck by objects or subjected to other risks as a result of working at heights.

Identify Fall Hazards

GSCC RO's are responsible for indentify all physical locations and tasks that could cause harm due to a fall, whether it is a person or an object falling including, but not limited to:

- Any structure or plant being constructed or installed, demolished or dismantled, inspected, tested, repaired or cleaned
- Any fragile surface e.g. cement sheeting roofs, rusty metal roofs, fibreglass sheeting roofs and skylights
- Unstable surfaces e.g. areas where there is potential for ground collapse
- Near an unprotected open edge e.g. near incomplete stairwells
- Plant, equipment or locations that expose workers to falls from height
- Near a hole, shaft or pit into which a worker could fall or on a sloping surface of greater than 45 degrees e.g. trenches, lift shafts or service pits.

Assessment

A risk assessment must be completed prior to commencement of working at heights. Appropriate SWMS or JSA should be completed, detailing steps to be undertaken, associated hazards and the controls to be implemented to minimise risks.

Control measures or equipment used to eliminate the risk of falls are to be:

- fit for purpose
- suitable for nature and duration of the work
- used correctly
- maintained in good working order
- reviewed and revised
- Establish emergency and rescue procedures to address fall hazards
- Provide relevant workers with adequate information, training and instruction in relation to emergency and rescue procedures

If there is a risk, control measures need to be implemented.

The Code of Practice for preventing falls at work set out specific control measures which must be implemented in the following order:

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 2 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

- a) Ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that any work that may involve a fall hazard is carried out on the ground or on a solid construction;
- b) If not reasonably practicable, then the risk must be minimised by using a passive fall prevention device;
- c) If a) and b) are not reasonably practicable, then the risk must be minimised using a work positioning system;
- d) If a), b) and c) are not reasonably practicable, then the risk must be minimised using a fall arrest system;
- e) If a), b), c) and d) are not reasonably practicable, then the risk must be minimised by implementing the following risk control measures:
 - using a ladder
 - an administrative control
 - all other reasonably practicable risk control measures.

Implement Control Methods

Risk Control Hierarchy

The hierarchy of control is a sequence of options which offer you a number of ways to approach the hazard control process. Implement the best measure possible working your way down the list, to prevent a fall from more than two metres:

- Option 1 - Working on the ground or solid construction.
- Option 2 - Using a passive device such as scaffolding; temporary, step or elevating work
- Option 3 - Platform; order picking forklift; forklift with mounting cage; guard railing; safety mesh; or building maintenance unit.
- Option 4 - Using a work positioning system such as an industrial rope access system or travel restraint system.
- Option 5 - Using a safety net, catch platform or safety harness system.
- Option 6 - Use a fixed or portable ladder or administrative measures

Scaffolding

Scaffolding work platforms are generally rated as light, medium or heavy duty.

- Any scaffold from which a person or object could fall more than four metres must be erected, altered and dismantled by or under the direct supervision of a licensed scaffolder
- Scaffolding conforms to *AS/NZS 4576 Guidelines for Scaffolding* and the *AS/NZS 1576 Scaffolding*
- 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.

Elevating Work Platforms

- Elevating Work Platforms (EWPs) include scissor lifts, cherry pickers, boom lifts and travel towers. Some are designed for hard flat surfaces while others are designed to be operated on rough terrain
- Workers operating the platform must be trained and instructed in safe operating procedures for the particular brand and type of equipment, as well as the safe use of fall arrest equipment and emergency rescue procedures

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 3 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

- Platforms are only used as working platforms and not as a means of entering and exiting a work area
- The surface area is to be assessed to make sure that there are no penetrations or obstructions which could cause uncontrolled movement or overturning of the platform
- Persons working in travel towers, boom lifts or cherry pickers must wear a correctly anchored safety harness
- Workers must be licensed when operating elevating work platforms with a boom length of 11 metres or more.

Fall Arrest Systems

A fall arrest system is intended to safely stop a worker falling an uncontrolled distance and reduce the impact of the fall. Fall arrest systems should only be used if it is not reasonably practicable to use higher level controls or if higher level controls might not be fully effective in preventing a fall on their own.

Key safety considerations in using fall arrest systems are:

- The correct selection, installation and use of the equipment
- Equipment and anchorages are designed, manufactured and installed to be capable of withstanding the force applied to them as a result of a person's fall
- Any fall arrest system used is designed and installed so that the person falls the shortest possible distance before stopping
- Workers using a fall arrest system wear adequate head protection
- Equipment used to arrest a fall must be inspected and certified by a competent person as safe to use prior to reuse.

Ladder Works

The use of ladders and administrative controls are the least effective of the control measures and require a high level of supervision. Ladders must only be used when it is not reasonably practicable to use a higher level control measure.

Some tasks may be of a short duration, as in changing light globes and it may be impracticable to set up work platforms or scaffolding.

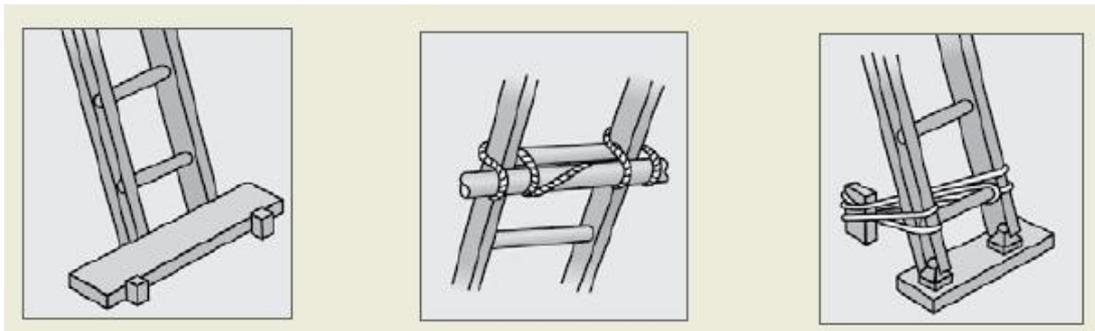
If the use of a ladder is deemed appropriate:

- A risk assessment of the task is required to ensure all hazards are identified
- Risks associated with using a ladder include the condition of the ladder, others being struck by falling objects and surface conditions
- Control methods for using a ladder must be in place, such as maintaining three points of contact on ladder, procedures for doing the task and use of tool belt or systems to carry and hold tools whilst up ladder
- Tasks that occur above two metres should consider use of a ladder with attached work platforms
- When working below two meters works may be conducted from an appropriate ladder or step providing that the worker can and must maintain three points of contact with the ladder at all times

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 4 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	



SAFE USE OF LADDERS



Before a ladder is used ensure:

- It is in good condition, inspected for faults and removed from service if damaged
- It is on firm, stable and level ground
- It is the correct height for the task to avoid reaching or stretching
- It is not too close or too far from the support structure. The distance between the ladder base and the supporting structure should be one metre for every four metres of working ladder height (4:1 ratio)
- It is secured from slipping or sliding and/or there is another person holding the base of the ladder
- It is not placed so that the weight of the ladder and any person using the ladder is supported by the rungs
- All the locking devices on the ladder are secure
- Materials or tools are not carried while climbing the ladder by using a tool belt or side pouch
- Only light duty work is undertaken while on the ladder where three points of contact can be maintained and tools can be operated safely with one hand
- Slip resistant base, rungs or steps are provided
- Slip resistant shoes are worn

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 5 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

- Ladders are not to be used:
 - in access areas or next to doors
 - on scaffolding or an elevating work platform to get extra height
 - next to power lines
 - in very wet or windy conditions
 - in traffic areas unless the working area is barricaded.

'No Go' Areas

Barriers should be used in conjunction with signs to cordon-off areas where there is a risk of falling or being hit by falling objects. They should be highly visible and securely fixed to prevent displacement.

Safe Work Procedures

- An administrative control may be as simple as a SWMS that describes the steps involved in safely undertaking a task. It may also include any particular training, instruction and the level of supervision required e.g. a safe work procedure to reduce the risk of falls when entering or exiting vehicles may include instructing drivers to not jump down from the cab and always maintain three points of contact when climbing into or out of the cab
- SWMS must indicate what control measures are to be used to minimise potential for injury to workers or damage to plant and equipment. Control measures must be selected in accordance with the hierarchy of control (in priority order): elimination, substitution, isolation, engineering, administration and personal protective equipment
- It may be necessary to use a combination of control measures to eliminate or minimise the risk. The use of personal protective equipment as a control measure must be limited to situations where other controls are not practicable or where personal protective equipment is used in conjunction with other measures to increase protection.

Working Near Power Lines

When working near power lines a licensed spotter must be used to monitor the progress of the work and its proximity to hazards (refer Working in No Go Zones Procedure).

Working On Roof Tops

Persons responsible for access to roof tops by any workers must have in place a procedure to ensure workers:

- Are evacuated if an emergency occurs within the building
- Can be given treatment if an incident or injury occurs
- Can be accounted for when working alone on the roof.

The procedure should ask the worker intending to access the roof to provide information to help monitor and ensure a worker can be contacted in an emergency:

- Name or company name
- Mobile phone number
- An entered time and expected exit time.

Procedures for working on roofs should include:

- Wearing of non-slip footwear
- Work around unprotected roof edge sections
- Prevention of objects falling from the roof and clear working areas below while working on the roof
- Manual handling issues associated with restricted access

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 6 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

- Weather conditions and personal protective equipment required e.g. hat, sun glasses and sun screen
- Electrical safety for tools in use and identification of overhead power lines
- Fragile roof sections
- Asbestos

Training, Instruction and Supervision Requirements

The training and instruction should include:

- The work method to be used, including access methods and the method to be adopted to prevent falls
- The correct use, care and storage of individual fall arrest equipment and safety nets
- The correct use, care and storage of personal protective equipment, tools and equipment used including electrical safety.

Implement Emergency Procedures

Emergency procedures must be in place covering rescue and first aid options such as:

- Appropriate first aid available for injuries associated with falls
- Availability of First Aid Officers
- How workers working at height communicate in an emergency

Establish emergency and rescue procedures to address fall hazards, including:

- emergency procedures relating to the use of risk control measures, and
- procedures to rescue a person who is exposed to a fall hazard and in need of emergency assistance.

The procedures must be tested so that they are efficient and effective. The person conducting the business or undertaking must provide workers with suitable and adequate information, instruction and training.

6. Contractors

Contractors must provide a JSA or SWMS for any work at height activities, that clearly describes the risk assessment process, including how the work will be undertaken, maintenance and training provided for equipment used

- GSCC RO is to provide site inductions and any relevant information to the contractor.
- Control measures for work performed at height must be reviewed for effectiveness and compliance by the GSCC RO.

7. Reference

- *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* Section 21
- *Victorian Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2007* (Prevention of Falls)
- *Compliance Code Prevention of Falls in General Construction 2008*
- *Prevention of Falls Code of Practice (Use of Ladders 2005)*
- *Australian Standard AS/NZS 1891.4 2000* Sections 1.5, 2.1.6, 9.1.

8. Supporting Procedures and Documents

- M11/1422: Workplace Safety Hazard Identification Checklist Comprehensive
- M11/21526: Working In No Go Zones
- M10/109360: Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 7 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	

- M10/115497: Site Risk Assessment Form

Trim Reference	Procedure number	Date Last Reviewed:	Issue Number:	Endorsed by	Page 8 of 8
M10/109367	46.PRO3.30	28.6.2012	1	The Executive	