



Hard Facilities Department

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Summerhill Services Limited

Operational Procedure SSLOP08

Working at Height

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PART A – PROCEDURE STATEMENT & OBJECTIVES

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Hard Facilities Operational Procedure is to protect staff and others against risks to their health while working at height.
- In the first instance try to **AVOID** working at height (e.g. carry out most of the work from ground level / extendable tools from ground level)
 - If that is not possible then **PREVENT** a fall from occurring (e.g. introduce guardrails to a non-fragile roof)
 - If that is not possible then **MINIMISE** the distance or consequences of a fall (e.g. introduce safety nets, air bags or fall-arrest system)
- 1.2 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 – Part 1 Section 2 requires safe access and egress, a safe workplace and safe systems of working. The Facilities Department will assess all work activities and ensure that safe access and egress is provided while working at height;
- 1.3 The Work at Height Regulations 2005 state that if you control work at height you must make sure that the work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. Other applicable information CDM regulations 2015, HSE INDG401 (rev2) A brief guide to work at height.
- 1.4 Work at Height means any place where, if precautions were not taken, a person could fall down and injure themselves. If they:
- Work above ground level
 - Could fall from an edge, through an opening or fragile surface, or
 - Could fall from ground level into an opening in a floor or hole within the ground
 - Anywhere a person can fall from one level to another
- 1.5 The main hazards are associated with falls from heights, from roof edges, through fragile materials and from access platforms and ladders. Falling materials also present serious potential hazards;
- 1.6 Most of the Hard Facilities Department 'working at height' activities occur at a low level and are a low to medium risk e.g. changing a light fitting not exceeding 2 metres in height. These can usually be managed off small step ladders. However, on installations and buildings that necessitate operating in elevated positions, it is essential that a suitable means of access be selected for the works personnel to ensure that the work can be carried out safely upon each installation;
- 1.7 As contractors are required extensively to work on buildings and elevated plant, similar precautions are necessary and it is therefore crucial that advance assessment of access needs is undertaken prior to each job commencing. For the more extensive operations or short-term jobs carried out in locations where potential hazards exist, method statements would normally be required from contractors that must give prominence to the pre-planning of access needs;

- 1.8 Where regular access is required to elevated positions on buildings and plant, fixed guardrails and working platforms must be provided as opposed to utilising temporary access equipment;
- 1.9 With respect to temporary access equipment, work at heights exceeding 2m (6'6") requires secure footholds and handholds. Thus, ladders and painters' trestles are only suitable for light duty maintenance and inspection purposes. The equipment that will be most frequently used includes steps, ladders, crawling boards, lightweight tower scaffolds, mobile hydraulic work platforms, suspended cradles and common scaffolds. In some instances, the access equipment would need to be supplemented by the use of safety harnesses, although these are an absolute last resort and are not a substitute for providing a safe workplace;
- 1.10 This operational procedure provides basic guidance upon selection, use and maintenance of commonly used access equipment. Further guidance is available from the Senior Facilities Manager or the Supervising Capital Manager or Contract Administrator.

2.0 Applicability

- 2.1 This Operational Procedure applies only to all of the activities carried out either directly by, or under contract for the Hard Facilities Department of Summerhill Services Limited. The Trust itself has a central risk assessment policy (R&S 01) which will be followed by the Facilities Department. This procedure simply extends the provisions to cover the Hard Facilities operations and activities.

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of the Facilities Management and Maintenance team to ensure this Operational Procedure is implemented.
- 3.2 All personnel as defined within Section 2 of this document 'Applicability' must adhere to the requirements of this Operational Procedure.

PART B – ORGANISATION

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Facilities Department

4.1.1 The Facilities Department will meet the requirements of the relevant regulations to carry out 'Risk Assessments' prior to work to ensure that appropriate safe access can be provided. Where possible a permanent safe access will be provided.

4.2 Senior Facilities and Capital Managers duties:

- Ensure specific risk assessments are conducted prior to any works at height taking place and that method statements and risk assessments are obtained, approved and filed;
- Where the risk cannot be eliminated or reduced by permanent measures, ensure that all relevant PPE and safe access equipment is provided, stored and maintained in a safe fashion;
- Ensure that only competent staff may conduct this work. This will involve the training of Facilities direct trades and the evaluation of specialist contractor training and competence in working at height;
- Establish whether the roof area to be worked upon is a "Fragile Roof". A fragile roof is one which is liable to break if a person worked on it or fell on to it. E.g. corrugated metal sheeting (corroded), glazing (old roof lights), slates and tiles, fibre cement / polycarbonate sheeting and rotten timber decking.
- Ensure that all work at height is conducted on a "Permit to Work" basis. Refer to the relevant Permit Procedure SSLOP21 for further details;
- Ensure that all work at height is properly supervised (A.P's consulted before work commences), and that lone working is not permitted on such activities;
- Periodically inspect work to ensure that it is being conducted properly.

PART C – ARRANGEMENTS

5.0 Working At Heights

5.1 Ladder Action Points

- Ladders can only be used for low-risk, light work of short duration, less than 30 minutes;
- Ensure a risk assessment is always carried out prior to commencement of works;
- If there is no relevant risk assessment then a new one should be prepared;
- Work at heights will only be undertaken by properly trained persons;
- Ask your Supervisor for advice if you think the job can be done more safely in a different way;
- The conditions on the site should be considered – weather, movement of persons and vehicles etc;
- The nature of the work should be considered – the type of tools to be used and the weight of any article to be fixed;
- The access to the area of work should be restricted by notices or screens.
- Safety helmets must be worn;
- At least one hand must be holding the ladder at all times.

5.2 Ladder Classification and Use

Classification

Timber, aluminium and carbon fibre ladders are divided into three classes: -

- ☐ **Class 1** the heaviest duty, is suitable for construction work where the ladder is subject to substantial loads;
- ☐ **Class 2** is intended for lighter trades, such as decorating where relatively light loads are involved.
- ☐ **Class 3** is for light e. g. domestic use.
NOT TO BE USED ON Facilities SITES.

Class 1 and class 3 ladders are covered by BS 1129 and BS 2037; Class 2 ladders by BS EN 131. It is important that the correct class of ladder is selected, choice being determined by the type of work to be carried out and the likely load to be imposed.

Class 3 Ladders should not be used for commercial purposes.

Use

- All ladders and steps must be inspected frequently by a nominated competent person who is knowledgeable in the construction tolerances of the equipment to be inspected. Inspections are not to exceed 6 months in accordance with the Facilities Department PPM procedures;
- Ladders and Stepladders shall be inspected by the user at the start of each shift. Users will not be required to record such inspections.
- In order to allow for inspection, ladders will not be painted. Coating with a preservative and/or clear varnish is permitted.
- Timber ladders should be free of splits or cracks, splintering, warping or bruising;
- Only use marked identified “Facilities” ladders/steps which are included upon the ladder inspection register;
- Staff must ensure “Facilities” ladders/steps are locked back into the approved location on completion of the work;
- There will be three points of contact at all times, providing two hands are not required to carry out the work;
- Only one person to use the ladder at any one time;
- Ladders must not be extended beyond their design length e.g. up to 18 rungs – 4 rungs overlap;
- Ladders should be set correctly – a rough guide is four rungs up – one out which provides a working angle of (75°), i.e. 8 metres up – 2 metres out;
- Ladders should be close enough to the work so as to prevent overreaching;
- Carry light tools in a holster or a tool bag slung from a strap over the shoulder or use a hoist line to carry tools and materials up and down;
- The surface on which the ladder is placed should be firm, sound and level. If it is intended to rest the ladder on an uneven base or on stairways, etc., then a levelling device shall be fixed to the lower end of the stile or stiles to ensure that the ladder is supported evenly. Blocks of wood, etc., shall not be used to pack-up stiles on uneven ground.
- The ladder should be faced when climbing or descending;
- The top of the ladder should be secured or someone should foot the ladder or a proprietary ladder restraint should be used;
- Only GRP ladders are to be used in conjunction with electrical work;
- Trades staff must not use any ladder or stepladder which is found to be in an unserviceable state and the matter reported to their supervisor;
- Homemade or makeshift ladders will not be used, regardless of their length;
- Ladders used as a means of access shall extend at approximately 1 metre above the stepping off point, unless there is an alternative suitable handhold;
- A rest platform shall be provided at vertical intervals of 9 metres. Where persons can fall from the platform, then guardrails will be provided.
- Ladders should not lean directly against any fragile surface.
- Ladders should be placed such that they do not obstruct accesses.

5.3 **Working At Heights – Steps, Roof Ladders, Portable Tower Scaffolding**

5.3.1 **Steps**

- As the ladders above, only Class 1 or 2 may be used on Facilities sites.
- Steps should be fully extended and at right angles to the work.
- Stepladders will only be used for light work where there is no side loading of the equipment and where the user can carry out the work without overreaching.
- If stepladders are to be used behind a door, then the door should be propped open whilst the user is in attendance on the ladder. Alternatively, a sentry will be posted to alert persons to the presence of the ladder.
- The top tread or the rear of the steps must not be used as a foot support.
- Only one person to use the steps at any one time.
- The surface on which the steps are placed should be sound and level.
- Steps should never be used to support boards or staging.
- Steps should be stored and locked away when not in use.

5.3.2 **Roof Ladders**

- Roof ladders used without other means of protection from falls should only be used for short duration work i.e. minor maintenance work lasting 10 minutes or less.
- The ladders must be of sufficient length for the slope involved.
- The ridge hook must be properly positioned over the ridge so that it is supported on the opposite slope.
- Only one person to use the ladder at any one time.
- Pads of resilient material must be in place to the underside of the ladder to prevent damage and sudden movement of the ladder.
- The ladder should be faced when climbing or descending.

5.3.3 **Portable Tower Scaffolding**

- Towers should be erected by (PASMA) trained persons ONLY.
- The tower MUST be fully erected with guardrails and toe boards secured.
- Inspect before each use to see that the height/base ratio is within limits and that no parts have been removed or altered from the correct configuration.
- Walkway platforms must not be overloaded or cluttered with tools or materials.
- Any spillages must be cleaned immediately.
- Apply force at or near base to move tower with no personnel or materials on it.
- The surface on which the tower is placed should be sound and level.
- The tower should be close enough to the work.
- The tower should have good access.
- Avoid using the tower in windy or severe weather conditions.
- Check tower is clear of overhead obstructions before moving.

5.3.4 **Trestles** are **NOT** to be used by the Facilities teams.

5.4 **Working At Heights – Portable Access Platforms, Tubular Scaffolding**

5.4.1 **Portable Access Platform**

- ONLY trained persons shall be permitted to operate the platform.
- The platform must not be overloaded.
- The platform must not be used in high wind speeds (refer to manufacturers instructions)
- Stabilisers must be fully extended and the ground should be even.
- There must be no overhead hazards i.e. live cables, electrical conductors.
- Cage drop down entry bar must be closed securely after entering the cage.
- Cage must not be cluttered with tools or materials.
- Any spillages in the cage must be cleaned immediately.
- The access platform must only be transported with a sufficient number of staff available.

5.4.2 **Tubular Scaffolding**

- Scaffolding will only be erected, maintained and dismantled by a specialist firm.
- Scaffolding must be tagged and hand-over certificate provided before initial use.
- Scaffolding must be inspected every 7 days by a competent person and after any inclement weather or other occurrence which may have affected its stability.
- Scaffolding must only be erected in accordance with the current regulations.
- Fence off the base of scaffolding to prevent children or vandals gaining access.

5.5 **Working at Height - Mobile Elevated Work Platforms (MEWPS)**

5.5.1 The following hazards may be encountered when using work platforms:

- Overturning due to overloading, gradients, wind-loading, travelling with raised platform on unsuitable terrain, non-use of stabilisers/outriggers, or effects of acceleration/deceleration force.
- Falling of persons, tools and materials from platforms.
- Trapping of persons in the raising, lowering or rotating mechanism.
- Trapping of persons between platform and fixed obstructions, e.g. roof trusses, electricity conductors.
- Collision between work platform and buildings, fixed obstructions, other lifting appliances or other plant and vehicles.
- Failure of platform supports or raising, lowering, rotating or telescoping mechanism.
- Inadvertent movement, resulting from, for example, misapplication of controls, traction/slewing, brake failure.
- Stranding of personnel on raised platform due to power or control failure.
- Electrical, e.g. electric shock, circuit faults.
- Persons being struck by a work platform or any part thereof.

- 5.5.2 The Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER) require that all lifting operations are to be planned by a competent person and that any equipment used for lifting or lowering loads or people (including MEWPs) should be of adequate strength and stability and thoroughly examined at regular intervals thereafter.
- 5.5.3 Due to serious potential hazards encountered when using working platforms, the operation and control must be left to the hire company's operator, or Facilities trades team member, or approved contractor all of whom must have been trained and instructed accordingly.
- 5.5.4 The operator must respond to instructions given by the Senior Facilities / Capital Manager in respect of positioning of the work platform to ensure that work is carried out efficiently.
- 5.5.5 When parking a MEWP, the Senior Facilities / Capital Manager is required to agree a suitable location with the operator.
- 5.5.6 Safety harnesses MUST be worn whilst using MEWPS.
- 5.5.7 Care must be taken to ensure that the platform is not overloaded as a result of the way it is used.
- 5.5.8 Care must be exercised in the use of portable hand tools and equipment and component parts of an installation to ensure that they cannot fall from the platform causing hazards to those below.
- 5.5.9 HSE GEIS6 (General Information Sheet No.6) provides safeguards to be adopted in the selection, management and use of MEWP's; Senior Facilities / Capital Managers will follow this guidance.

5.6 **Working At Heights – Roof Work**

5.6.1 **Key Points**

- A Permit to Work will be required for all roof works.
- Work on roofs will only be undertaken by properly trained persons;
- Ask your Supervisor for advise if you think the job can be done more safely in a different way;
- The conditions of the site should be considered – weather, movement of persons and vehicles etc;
- The nature of the work should be considered – the type of tools to be used and the weight of the article to be fixed;
- The access to the area of work should be restricted by notices or screens.
- Safety helmets must be worn;
- Safety harnesses must be adequately secured to prevent free falls in excess of 2 metres;
- Short Duration means minutes rather than hours.

5.6.2 **Sloping Roofs**

- Work of a short duration taking minutes only e.g. isolated slate/tile or felt repairs may be undertaken using suitable roof ladders. (See 'Working at Heights');
- All other roof work must have a suitable scaffold preferably with a working platform.

5.6.3 **Fragile Roofs**

- All roofs of a fragile nature should be adequately and suitably identified;
- On no account should staff attempt to walk over the fragile roof;
- If work on fragile roofs must be undertaken then crawler boards of sufficient size and number to support the load should be used.
- Where roofs have been covered with bitumastic paint or similar such that the roof construction cannot be identified, then the roof must be inspected from the underside to determine its' nature.

5.6.4 **Flat Roofs**

- Work of a short duration taking minutes only e.g. isolated inspections or repairs may be undertaken with care. If going outside the boundary of approved walkways and protected areas, a suitable safety harness must be worn and a permit to work issued;
- All other work on a flat roof must be provided with suitable edge protection;
- For major works all openings within the flat roof must be protected.

5.6.5 **Work on Curved Roofs**

- Work of a short duration taking minute's only e.g. isolated inspections or repairs may be undertaken using a suitable safety harness following issue of a permit to work.

5.7 **Working At Heights – Roofs & Loft Spaces**

5.7.1 **Key Points**

- Before entering a roof space, obtain authorisation from Facilities Manager;
- Be aware of the dangers involved e.g. lack of boarded walkway;
- Provide a clear means of access to the point of entry;
- Ventilate the roof space where there appears to be a lack of air movement;
- Retain the access point in the open position for the duration of the work in order to facilitate escape in the case of emergency;
- Provide ventilation and maintain contact with the safetyman;
- Ensure the provision of adequate lighting for the proposed work;
- Wear a bump cap and carry a torch;
- Work from existing catwalks where provided;
- Naked lights / hot works are **NOT** permitted in the roof space ;
- Where naked lights are authorised on a roof, a fire extinguisher will be kept on the roof adjacent to the place of work and for the duration of the works;
- Work in roof spaces where there is a known risk from asbestos will be subject to a 'Permit to Work' system.

6.0 **Review**

- 6.1 This strategy is reviewed every three years, and updated if necessary by the Head of Facilities Manager. A review should take place when new or amended Regulations, Legislation and Guidance occur.

7.0 **Records**

- 7.1 Suitable and sufficient records of training, permits and risk assessments will be maintained.

PART D – APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RECOMMENDED LIST OF PROTECTIVE CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

- Safety Helmet
- Safety glasses / Goggles
- Ear Defenders
- Gloves
- Boots
- Sweat Shirts, T Shirts and Trousers
- Waterproof Over Clothes
- RAMS for the task (including rescue plan if using safety harness)
- Fully maintained access system e.g. scaffolding / MEWPS / Mobile towers
- Safety Harness (last resort)
- Safety line and or anchor points
- Materials hoisting facilities
- Fire Fighting equipment

APPENDIX B: FORMS & ATTACHMENTS

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APPENDIX C: AMENDMENTS

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