

WORKING AT HEIGHT POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Scope of Policy

The College recognises that hazards are present when working at any height. Falls from height are the largest causes of fatal and major injuries. Common causes are falls from ladders and through fragile roofs.

In order to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005, the College will provide a safe working environment for all employees, visitors and contractors who may be required to work at height. This will be achieved by:

- Identifying work activities that may involve working at height.
- Eliminating the need to work at height whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so.
- Ensuring that, where work at height cannot be eliminated, risk assessments are undertaken to evaluate & manage risk.
- Implementing a safe system of work that will prevent falls of persons, materials & equipment.
- Providing suitable plant and equipment to allow safe access for persons and materials.
- Ensuring working platforms and any supporting structures are appropriate and designed in accordance with current standards.
- Ensuring that regular inspections of all equipment required for working at height are undertaken.
- Providing adequate information and training to ensure that only competent persons are engaged in working at height.

It is the responsibility of individuals to: -

- Co-operate with this policy.
- To abide by the requirements of any systems of work designed to protect them.
- Utilise any plant and equipment in a safe & responsible manner and only if they have received appropriate training to do so safely.
- Report defects immediately.

2. References

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended
- Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Health and Safety in Roof Work – HSE Guidance Note HS(G)33
- Working at Height. A brief guide - INDG 401
- Safe use of ladders and stepladders. A brief guide INDG455

3. Key Legal Requirements

- Adopt an appropriate policy
- Assess the risks posed to staff and others
- Implement appropriate control measures to bring risks identified down to an acceptable level
- Provide staff with information, training and supervision

PROCEDURE:

4. General

- 4.1. These procedures apply to all staff (full-time, part-time and temporary), students, contractors and visitors.
- 4.2. The Work at Height Regulations 2005 apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. The former '2 metre rule' no longer applies and with these regulations now also covering situations where workers have the potential to fall when working on the level or below ground.
- 4.3. Before any work at height is carried out, a competent person will plan and properly organise the task. This will involve the undertaking of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and, where appropriate, the development of formal working procedures.
- 4.4. The planning, organising and risk assessing process will take account of the following hierarchy:
 - avoid the need to work at height through designing out the work at height activity
 - protect through the installation of guard rails or parapet wall construction
 - arrest the fall with as short a potential fall distance as is practicable and the impact on the faller as low as is feasible (e.g. safety nets are favoured over harnesses).
- 4.5. Where work at height is unavoidable, the following will be considered as part of the risk assessment:
 - competence of person(s) to work at height election and use of appropriate work equipment
 - the particular risks from fragile surfaces
 - inspection and maintenance of equipment.

5. Working on Roofs

- 5.1. In addition to the requirements given above, the following requirements will also be adhered to for roof work.
 - Only roof work of a non-extensive nature may be carried out by college employees. In deciding what is non-extensive work, an assessment of the time, difficulty, content of the work and number of people involved, will be made by the Facilities Manager and in line with Health and Safety in Roof Work – HSE Guidance Note HS(G)33 and Working at Height – a brief guide - INDG 401.
 - All roofs on any College building will be considered 'fragile' unless reliable information to the contrary is available.
 - Access to all roofs will be restricted to appropriately trained and competent personnel.
 - Roof ladders and duck boards of sound construction must be used for roof work.
 - Extra care will be taken where skylights or other fragile panels are present.
 - When using safety harnesses a check must be made that there is a suitable and secure anchorage point and that there is safe access to the

anchor point. The fall arrest device must always be shorter than the distance to the ground.

- If a skylight is being used as the means of getting onto the roof, the anchorage point must be located inside the loft.
- In all cases the anchorage point must be deemed capable of withstanding the shock of a fall.
- No roof work will be undertaken in adverse weather conditions. Nor will roof top work be undertaken if there are overhead power lines which have not been isolated prior to work commencement.
- Work will always be planned and executed in such a way as to ensure the safety of all concerned, including the general public.

6. Working with ladders

6.1. In addition to the requirements given above, the following requirements will also be adhered to when ladders are being used.

- Ladders used by college employees will be of sound construction with no missing steps or rungs and will remain unpainted so that cracks and other faults can be easily recognised.
- A ladder will be visually inspected by the user before use and after something has changed, e.g. a ladder has been dropped or moved from a dirty area to a clean area (check the state or condition of the feet).
- ***A pre-use check should include:***
 - Check the stiles to make sure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle or collapse.
 - Check the feet – if they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder could slip. Also check ladder feet when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g. dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g. paving slabs), to make sure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g. soil, chippings or embedded stones) is making contact with the ground.
 - Check the rungs – if they are bent, worn, missing or loose the ladder could fail.
 - Check any locking mechanisms – if they are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse. Ensure any locking bars are engaged.
 - Check the stepladder platform – if it is split or buckled the ladder could become unstable or collapse.
 - Check the steps or treads on stepladders – if they are contaminated, they could be slippery; if the fixings are loose on steps, they could collapse.
- If any of the above defects are noted the ladder should not be used, removed from use, labelled and a request for repair or replacement submitted to the Facilities Manager. Where it is not possible to repair a ladder, it will be destroyed as soon as reasonably practicable.

- A Ladder Inspection Report will be completed for each ladder on a monthly basis by the caretaker, usually around the first Friday of every month and any actions required by the inspection must be notified to the Facilities Manager by giving him a copy of the Inspection Report. Following the inspection the ladder may have to be withdrawn from service. Actions must be signed off by the original inspector before the ladder can be put into service.

Ladders can be used for work at height when a risk assessment has shown that using equipment offering a higher level of fall protection is not justified because of the low risk and short duration of use; or there are existing workplace features which cannot be altered. Short duration is not the deciding factor in establishing whether use of a ladder is acceptable or not – the risk should have first been assessed. A guide is that if a task would require staying up a leaning ladder or stepladder for more than 30 minutes at a time, it is recommended that an alternative piece of equipment is considered.

- Only use ladders in situations where they can be used safely, e.g. where the ladder will be level and stable, and where it is reasonably practicable to do so, the ladder can be secured.
- Ladders in use must be positioned at the correct angle (4 up for 1 out) on a firm base and be tied at the top for support. The ladder will be supported by a second person until tied. Alternatively, if the ladder cannot be tied, a second person will act to 'foot' the bottom of the ladder and act as a look-out.
- Not more than one person at a time will be allowed on a ladder and, if the ladder is the actual work platform, then the ladder should extend at least 1.50m above the highest rung on which the employee has to stand. Pole ladders (i.e. single section ladders with the stiles made from a single pole cut lengthways) will only be used for gaining access and will not be used as working platforms. When using stepladders, the user will not use the top step as a platform.
- Where using a ladder to gain access to a work platform, the ladder will extend at least 1m above the landing place. The landing rung should be level with or slightly above the landing platform. There should be space between each rung for a proper foothold, ensuring that there are no obstructions to the foot.
- Ladders will not be climbed higher than the third rung from the top.
- Short ladders may be carried by one person, either vertically against the shoulder or horizontally across the shoulder. Longer ladders will be carried horizontally on the shoulders of two people, one either end, in as comfortable a manner as possible. Care should be taken to avoid overhead hazards (such as power lines).
- As over-reaching or stretching whilst on a ladder can lead to loss of balance, if the work area cannot be reached, the ladder will be moved, or a longer one used, to allow the work area to be reached safely.

- After use, ladders will be cleaned. Ladders will not be stored outside unless adequately covered and will be hung horizontally on a rack (supported under the stiles) or supported on blocks (under the stiles).
- They will not be supported by the rungs, stored flat on the ground or placed against walls, radiators or hot pipes, which can lead to warping, sagging or distortion.

7. Summary of Responsibilities

7.1. All individuals working at height must;

- comply with these procedures and associated policy.
- abide by the requirements of any systems of work designed to protect them.
- utilise any plant and equipment in a safe & responsible manner and only if they have received appropriate training to do so safely.
- report defects immediately.

Further information Work at Height

- <https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/the-law.htm>

LADDER INSPECTION RECORD

- Ladder Unique Identification Number

Manufacturer

Description / Type of Ladder

	Yes	No
Identification: Ladder identification is legible	☐	☐
Stiles: Damage present- particularly at head and feet?	☐	☐
Rungs: Signs of wear?	☐	☐
Stiles and Rungs: Any movement?	☐	☐
Cleanliness: Are stiles and rungs free from dirt, mud or grease?	☐	☐
Hinges, Bolts, Screws and Fittings: Are they all sound and secure?	☐	☐
Hinges: Do they operate easily?	☐	☐
Hinges: Do they need lubricating?	☐	☐
Feet: Are the feet in good condition?	☐	☐

Feet: Are they all in contact with ground?

☐☐

Ladder inspected by: (Print Name)

Signature:

Date:

Date of Next Inspection Due: (1 month on)

Inspector's Comments/Actions

If Comments or Actions have been entered, then a copy of this report must be passed to the Facilities Manager for action.

Yes

No

Ladder withdrawn from Service?

☐☐

The Inspector must approve the actions before the ladder goes back into service.

LADDER NO	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
NAC/1												
NAC/2												
NAC/3												
NAC/4												
NAC/5												
NAC/6												
NAC/7												
NAC/8												
NAC/9												
NAC/10												
NAC/11												

SUMMARY SHEET**YEAR:** _____

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant College policies, procedures and guidance documents, whether specifically listed above or subsequently published or amended.

The College reserves the right to update, introduce, or revise policies and procedures from time to time.

Compliance with the most current versions of applicable policies and procedures, as published, is expected.

Title:	Working at Height Policy and Procedure
Lead Officer:	Estates and Facilities Manager
Date last reviewed	October 2025
Next Review date:	October 2028
Approved By:	H&S Committee
Date first approved:	2022