

Purpose of this procedure:

The purpose of this Procedure is to establish the framework to implement the Working at Height Policy within NHS Lothian.

This Procedure applies to all staff in NHS Lothian or working on behalf of NHS Lothian in particular those with Management responsibilities. Managers of temporary and agency staff, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, students and work experience personnel will also be expected to follow the requirements contained within this Procedure. This Procedure applies to all work at height covered by the Work at Height Regulations and should be used in conjunction with the NHS Lothian Working at Height Policy.

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 regulations place a duty of care on Employers, Employees, and any person that controls the work of others (e.g. Facilities/IT), who may contract others (Contractors, Sub Contractors) to work at height.

NHS Lothian as an organisation will do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling from a height whilst at work. NHS Lothian as an organisation will avoid the need to work at height wherever possible. However, where such work is unavoidable, it will be carried out in accordance with the work at height regulations and NHS Lothian policy and procedures incorporating risk assessment and safe systems of work.

Any work at height needs to be properly planned in advance of the work activity, appropriately supervised and carried out in line with the requirements of the Risk Assessment and where applicable Method Statement. Careful consideration should be given to the selection and use of work equipment.

The Procedure:

Roles and Responsibilities

Senior Managers and Their Management Teams

Senior Managers and their Management Teams whose staff undertake tasks/activities that result in working at height are responsible for ensuring the following:

- That their staff are aware of this policy and the requirements within it.
- That every effort is made to avoid working at height (see flow chart Appendix 1)

- If working at height cannot be avoided then managers must make sure work is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height. Low-risk, relatively straightforward tasks will require less effort when it comes to planning.
- Where work at height activities are identified then a risk assessment should be undertaken before work commences. Should the risk assessment process identify that a significant risk exists then a safe system of work will be developed and then implemented.
- That all staff receive information, appropriate instruction, supervision and training in relation to working at height, the safe systems of work and safe use of any associated equipment
- That all staff who work at height are physically fit to do so.
- That the place where work at height is undertaken (including the means of access) is safe and has control measures in place to prevent a fall (taking into account the demands of the task, equipment and working environment).
- That there is provided suitable and sufficient work at height equipment or other measures to prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided. Contact either Estates or the Health and Safety Department for guidance on equipment selection.
- An inventory for working at height equipment is kept and recorded at departmental level.
- That they identify, implement and monitor suitable arrangements for the servicing and inspection of equipment where required. Inspection frequency will be determined by the use and location of the equipment.
- That contractors (and subcontractors) employed are competent to work at height and are managed and monitored in accordance with the Control of Contractors Policy.
- Ensure Personal Protective Equipment is provided to staff working at height and fit for purpose.
- Implement all aspects of NHS Lothian's Adverse Event Management Policy when reporting and investigating all working at height incidents or accidents.

Employees

- Must inform their line manager of any limitations they may have which may prevent them working at height.
- Ensure that where possible any working at height activity is avoided. If in doubt ask
- Inform their line manager of any work at height activities that they will need to undertake. If in doubt ask
- All policies and procedures designed to minimise incidents and accidents associated with working at height are understood and adhered to. If in doubt ask.

- Assist with the assessment of risks, and comply and adhere to the risk assessment findings and any safe systems of work identified for working at height.
- Report immediately, any working at height adverse events that may cause harm to them or others to their line manager. Record on the NHS Lothian Datix system.
- Immediately inform their line manager if they suspect that the safe system of work in place is ineffective or inadequate.
- Ensure that they wear the appropriate PPE as identified within any task based risk assessment.
- Ensure that any information, instruction and training for working at height is adhered to. If in doubt ask
- Where equipment is provided for working at height it must be used for its intended purpose
- Prior to use inspect ladders paying particular attention to the condition of the rungs, stiles, connectors, treads, crossbar, welds, screws, hinges and built in stability devices.
- Immediately report to their line manager any fault or defect with any work at height equipment and remove from use.

The Risk Assessment Process

Planning

Before any work at height is undertaken the following points must be complied with:

1. All work at height is properly planned and organised
2. Those involved in work at height are competent
3. The risks from work at height are assessed, and appropriate work equipment is selected and used
4. Where applicable the risks of working on or near fragile surfaces are properly managed
5. The equipment used for work at height is properly inspected and maintained.
6. Where applicable, Toolbox Talks must be undertaken prior to any working at height commencing.

Risk Assessment

When planning work at height there is a need to carry out a suitable and sufficient 'risk assessment'. The risks for working at height are usually well known and most necessary control measures are easy to apply.

Remember a risk assessment is

- a careful examination of the work at height task to identify hazards and
- a consideration of whether the hazards pose a risk that could cause harm to people.

As part of the risk assessment process always consider whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

If working at height is unavoidable then:

- Use an existing safe place of work to access work at height - don't cut corners, if there is already a safe means of access such as a permanent stair and guard railed platform use it!
- Provide or use work equipment to prevent falls, such as scaffolding, mobile access towers or mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) which have guardrails around the working platform.
- Minimise distance and consequences of a fall, for example by using a properly set up stepladder or ladder within its limitations for low level, short duration work only.
- High risk activities for working at height will require a Permit to Work system. These may include where access is required to any roof area. Increased levels of supervision are required where Permit to Work Systems are used.
- In addition, where planned work involves the use of a Mobile Elevated Work Platform or other mechanical means of working at height again increased levels of supervision will be required.
- Ensure that working at height training is provided, reviewed annually and is kept up to date. E.g. authorised person working at height training and ladder awareness training.
- Ensure the provision of emergency and rescue procedures are incorporated within the written safe system of work.

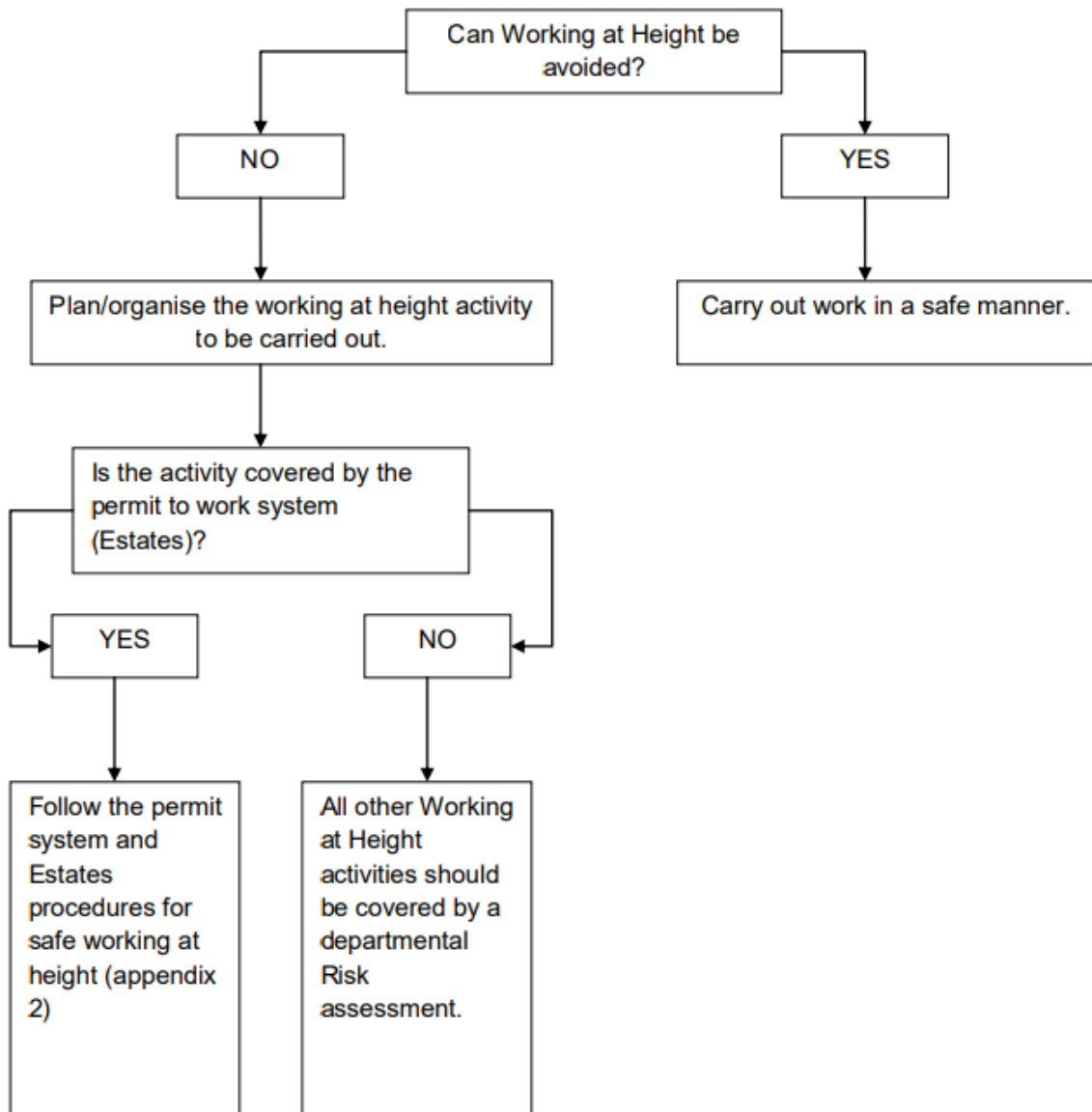
Active Monitoring

Those managers whose staff work at height should ensure effective implementation of this policy and associated procedure by systematically reviewing compliance through -

- The use of regular Inspections, Safety Walk Rounds or similar checking systems.
- The frequency of the inspections and checks will depend on the level of risk. E.g., high risk working at height tasks will require more frequent checks.
- Reviewing and discussing any local procedures with staff to determine if the safe systems of work (procedure) is effective.

Appendix 1

Procedural flow chart for working at height activities



Associated materials/references:

Associated Materials

- [NHS Lothian Working at Height Policy](#)
- [Procedural Chart for Working at Height](#)
- [Example of Task Based Risk Assessment for Working at Height](#)

Reference

[Working at Height: A brief guide, Health and Safety Executive](#)