

# **Breadsall Church Health and Safety Policy**

## **Working at Height Procedure and Safe Use of Ladders**

### **1. Introduction**

This document sets out the responsibilities, guidelines and control measures to manage work which involves working at height and working with ladders. This guidance provides information on the potential hazards of working at height, advice on risk assessments, appropriate selection of equipment and explains the hierarchy of control measures that must be applied when selecting measures to reduce risks.

### **2. Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of the Parochial Church Council to ensure that this procedure is adhered to and the relevant members of the church are trained.

It is also the responsibility of those members of the Church that are working at height to ensure they follow this procedure.

### **3. Definitions**

**Work at Height** – This is defined as follows:

- a. Work in any place including a place at or below ground level where, if measures required by these regulations were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury
- b. Moving around the workplace, except by a staircase in a permanent workplace where, if measures required by these regulations were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury

All work at height activities should be risk assessed in accordance with the HSE regulations 1999.

**Fragile Surface** – is any surface which would be liable to fail if any reasonably foreseeable loading were to be applied to it.

**Leaning/Extension ladder** – A straight ladder that can consist of 1-4 sections and can extend from 2 metres to over 8 metres in length.

**Step Ladder** – An A frame type ladder which may have a platform at the top and vary in height from 1 metre to over 5 metres.

**MEWP (Mobile Elevated Working Platform)** – This can be either a scissor lift or cherry picker type access platform, these can reach heights of in excess of 10 metres.

**Tower Scaffolding** – A selection of poles, clamps, boards etc. that is manually assembled to access various types of location.

### **4. Procedure**

Breadsall Church restricts working at height.

No Church member or contractor will undertake working at height without firstly complying with a suitable risk assessment which must adopt the hierarchy below:

- Avoid working at height wherever possible.
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where working at height cannot be avoided.
- Where the risk of falls cannot be eliminated, use other equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences should a fall occur.

### **5. Ladders**

Ladders can be permanent structures, on fixed or mobile plant, or moveable devices to gain access at height. In the case of temporary access, decide whether a mobile tower or scaffold would be a better method.

Leaning or Extension ladders should only be used for work at height if a risk assessment shows that more suitable equipment, such as a tower scaffold or mobile platform, is not justified because of the short duration of the work or features at the site which preclude the use of such equipment. This duration should be limited to less than 30 minutes.

Step ladders are suitable for small jobs of a short duration. They should be used for minor maintenance at low levels. They should have an A frame with a small working platform to hold tools and materials. The platform should never be used to stand on. There must be a mechanism to prevent the legs from spreading with a catch. The height of the ladder should not exceed three times the width of the base.

Ladders and stepladders will be of the Class 1 Industrial type and suitably maintained.

Ladders to EN131 are also acceptable up to the prescribed weight limitations.

All ladders are to be controlled and secure when not in use.

The pre use assessment will take into consideration:

- Are ladders the most suitable piece of equipment for the task
- Is the work of short duration
- Can the works be carried out in a safe manner
- Is the correct type of ladder being used e.g. fibre glass for electrical work
- Carry out a visual check on the equipment before starting work
  - no cracks
  - no warping or splitting
  - no corrosion
  - no sharp edges.
- Check the ladder is long enough to protrude sufficiently above the place of landing.
- Check the ground is firm and of suitable composition to safely support the equipment
- Check the ground is level
- Check the ladder is secure at the top, bottom and mid-way if necessary to prevent it moving.
- Look at the rungs – are they all there and are they sound?
- Check soles of shoes – are they clean and dry?

Ladders should only be used where:

- they will not be struck by vehicles
- pedestrians are prevented from walking beneath them
- they cannot be pushed over by opening doors, windows and the like.
- a secure handhold and support are always available.

Safe working use assessment:

- Climb up slowly using both hands on rails.
- Stay at least three rungs from the top to ensure you have a suitable hand hold.
- Tools, materials etc. should not be carried in hands.
- Check landing area at top is safe once off the ladder.
- Never over reach and always maintain a three point contact.
- Before descending locate first foothold.
- Use all rungs – do not jump or slide down the ladder.
- Check footing is safe at the bottom.

## **6. Mobile Elevated Working Platforms (MEWPs)**

If a mobile elevated work platform is to be used, it must be checked before use and any persons that are in the cage must wear a harness and attach the lanyard to the anchor point within the cage.

Mobile elevated working platform, such as “cherry picker” will only be used by trained, authorised, competent persons.

MEWPs are only to be used if:

- risk assessment and method statement is suitable and sufficient (contractors)
- the MEWP is placed on secure ground
- weather conditions are suitable and winds are not excessive (if used externally)
- barriers are erected below to segregate pedestrians from the potential falling materials
- the safe working load (SWL) is adhered to
- the floor load can support the MEWP
- PPE or accessories are suitable and worn
- formally maintained by hire company or owner to satisfy the statutory requirements of LOLER.

## **7. Tower Scaffolds**

We may have some practical areas that require the use of tower scaffolds or mobile towers.

All users of tower scaffolds must be familiar with the risk assessment and safe system of work, prior to its use and follow all appropriate control measures.

The correct harness and fall equipment must be used during erection and dismantling of the scaffolding.

## **8. Fixed Ladders**

Fixed ladders should only be used to access between floors where a staircase cannot be accommodated or is provided. Ladders should be maintained and checked regularly and be in a good state of repair. They should extend at least 1.1 m above the accessed floor and should have permanently fixed hoops to prevent falling.

## **9. Training**

No church members or contractors are to use access equipment (such as tower scaffolds, ladders, mobile elevated working platforms) unless they are authorised and have received appropriate valid training and have, where appropriate conducted and reviewed the risk assessment.

## **10. Inspections**

Ladders (lean / step):

- Visual inspection by the user before use. Any defects should be recorded and be reported to the Church Wardens.

Health and Safety Committee, May 2017

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