



Working at Heights Policy

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1 Statement of Aims and Objectives

- 1.1 The objective of the Working at Height Regulations 2005 is to reduce risks to health and safety whilst working in any place from which, if no action were taken, a person could fall a distance, liable to cause personal injury. This could, therefore, include any work carried out above or below ground or floor level.
- 1.2 South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) is committed to the health and safety to employees, service users, visitors and others. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Trust takes all reasonably practicable measures to ensure that its workplaces and areas under their control at the material time are safe and without unnecessary risks from working at height to all persons needing to access them by:
- Ensuring all potential working at height hazards are identified.
 - Any risk to safety is adequately controlled, and reduced to the lowest reasonably practicable level; and
 - Where necessary, appropriate risk assessments and method of reducing risk are in place.
- 1.3 This policy is applicable to all employees of the Trust, volunteers and others in the Trust who are required to work at height, irrespective of whether premises are managed, owned or leased by the Trust or owned by third parties. HART Teams within the trust have a specific set of Standard Operating Procedures/Safe Systems of work which qualifies them to work at height or in confined spaces.
- 1.4 The aims and objectives of this policy are to protect staff, as far as is reasonably practicable, from the risk of injury from working at height. In particular, this policy aims to:
- Ensure that tasks with a significant degree of risk, are assessed by competent persons, and safe systems of work are in place to reduce the risks to staff, patients and others, as far as is reasonably practicable.
 - Ensure that suitable and sufficient information and training is given to staff to ensure they understand their legal duties and are competent to apply the principles of working at height when doing so.
 - Ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff joining the Trust and throughout their employment via for example e-learning modules, and through annual key skills training and on the introduction of any new equipment or following significant incidents.



- Encourage full accurate reporting and recording of all accidents, incidents, near misses and ill-health related to working at height, and taking action to reduce the risk of recurrence, giving feedback to staff.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The Health and safety Executive considers this to be a priority issue, as falls from height are the main cause of fatal accidents at work, and the second biggest cause of major injuries.
- 2.2 The schedules of the Working at Heights Regulations 2005 cover the following:
- Existing places of work and means of access for working at height.
 - Collective fall prevention (e.g., guard rails, toe boards, barriers etc)
 - Working platforms
 - Safeguards for arresting falls
 - Personal fall protection systems (e.g., work restraints, work positioning, fall arrest and rope access)
 - Ladders and step ladders
 - Inspection reports (for working platforms in construction)
 - Revocation
- 2.3 This policy aim is to ensure that that the Trust operates within The Working at height Regulations, minimizing the risk of harm to employees as they carry out their work activities. Managers must ensure that all persons who are required to work at height are provided with suitable and sufficient health and safety information.
- 2.4 Information and Risk assessments should be communicated in an appropriate language with those exposed to risk.

3 Working at Heights – Overview

- 3.1. The purpose of this document is to provide staff with clear guidance in respect of working at height, either operationally, or on Trust premises.
- 3.2. The Working at Heights Regulations 2005 requires all staff to:
- Avoid working at height where it is reasonably practicable to do so.
 - Where it cannot be avoided, to prevent falls by using either an existing place of work that is already safe or the right kind of equipment.
 - To minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, by using the right kind of equipment where the risk cannot be eliminated.
- 3.3. Staff should:



- Do as much work as possible from the ground.
 - Ensure workers can get safely to and from where they work at height.
 - Ensure equipment is suitable, stable, and strong enough for the task, maintained, and checked regularly.
 - Ensure that they do not overload or overreach when working at height.
 - Take precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces.
 - Provide protection from falling objects.
 - Consider emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.
- 3.4. This recognises the emergency services' well-intentioned improvisation to rescue and recover a casualty in emergency situations. The Trust accepts that in certain emergency situations, this could place employees at higher risk than would normally be accepted, but this risk has to be balanced against the safety of those in danger and the need to give them care.
- 3.5. The Trust also acknowledges its responsibility to monitor the implementation and progress of this procedure and to review it accordingly.
- 3.6. The following are all requirements in law that you need to consider when planning and undertaking work at height. Staff must:
- Take account of weather conditions that could compromise worker safety.
 - Check that the place (e.g., a roof) where work at height is to be undertaken is safe. Each place where people will work at height needs to be checked every time, before use.
 - Stop materials or objects from falling or, if it is not reasonably practicable to prevent objects falling, take suitable and sufficient measures to make sure no one can be injured, e.g., use exclusion zones to keep people away or mesh on scaffold to stop materials such as bricks falling off.
 - Store materials and objects safely so they won't cause injury if they are disturbed or collapse.
 - Plan for emergencies and rescue, e.g., agree a set procedure for evacuation. Think about foreseeable situations and make sure employees know the emergency procedures.
- 3.7. When selecting equipment for working at height, managers must:
- Provide the most suitable equipment appropriate for the work and;
 - Take account of factors such as: the working conditions (e.g., weather); the nature, frequency and duration of the work; and the risks to the safety of everyone where the work equipment will be used.



- 3.8. The Work at height Access equipment Information Toolkit (or WAIT) is a free online resource that offers possible solutions. It provides details of common types of equipment used for work at height. HSE has also produced a guide on the safe use of ladders and stepladders (see 'References').
- 3.9. Work equipment needs to be assembled or installed according to the manufacturer's instructions, and in keeping with industry guidelines. Where the safety of the work equipment depends on how it has been installed or assembled, an employer should ensure it is not used until it has been inspected in that position by a competent person.
- 3.10. A competent person is someone who has the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to manage health and safety. Guidance on appointing a competent person can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/competence.
- 3.11. Any equipment exposed to conditions that may cause it to deteriorate, and result in a dangerous situation, should be inspected at suitable intervals appropriate to the environment and use. An inspection should be carried out every time something happens that may affect the safety or stability of the equipment, e.g., adverse weather, accidental damage.
- 3.12. The trust is required to keep a record of any inspection for types of work equipment including: guard rails, toe-boards, barriers or similar collective means of protection; working platforms (any platform used as a place of work or as a means of getting to and from work, e.g. a gangway) that are fixed (eg a scaffold around a building) or mobile (e.g. a mobile elevated working platform (MEWP) or scaffold tower); or a ladder. Any working platform used for construction work and from which a person could fall more than 2 metres must be inspected:
- After assembly in any position.
 - After any event liable to have affected its stability.
 - At intervals not exceeding seven days.
- 3.13. Where it is a mobile platform, a new inspection and report is not required every time it is moved to a new location on the same site. Any equipment, such as a MEWP, which has come from another business or rental company, must be accompanied by an indication (clear to everyone involved) when the last thorough examination has been carried out.
- 3.14. Employees have general legal duties to take reasonable care of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions, and to co-operate with their employer to enable their health and safety duties and requirements to be complied with.
- 3.15. For an employee, or those working under someone else's control, the law says they must:



- Report any safety hazard they identify to their employer.
- Use the equipment and safety devices supplied or given to them properly, in accordance with any training and instructions (unless they think that would be unsafe, in which case they should seek further instructions before continuing).

3.16. Employers must consult employees (either directly or via safety representatives), in good time, on health and safety matters. Issues that employees must be consulted on include:

- Risks arising from their work.
- Proposals to manage and/or control these risks.
- the best ways of providing information and training.

3.17. Employers can ask employees and their representatives what they think the hazards are, as they may notice things that are not obvious and may have some good, practical ideas on how to control the risks.

4 Definitions

Working at Height	“Work at height means work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.” This could be above or below ground level.
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5 Responsibilities

- 5.1. The **Chief Executive Officer** has overall accountability for health and safety within the Trust, and for the successful implementation of this policy.
- 5.2. The Executive **Director Quality and Nursing** is the director with delegated responsibility for ensuring that the Trust is compliant with health and safety legislation, and for managing the strategic development and implementation of this procedure as part of the risk, health and safety process.
- 5.3. **All Managers** have been delegated the responsibility for implementing this policy within their areas of control. All managers are responsible for undertaking written risk assessments and for reviewing these with their staff. Following any accident or near miss, managers must undertake an investigation and record this on the Datix system. All managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are regularly trained in manual handling. Managers are responsible for ensuring that the principles of this



policy are applied by the staff under their management in their workplace locations and that their staff understand their role in reducing risks.

5.4. **Health and Safety Lead** will:

- Act as the focus for advice and guidance
- Develop Trust Policy
- Follow up any related incidents and make appropriate recommendations.
- Ensure that any Working at heights issues arising from health and safety audits and inspections are highlighted to the relevant manager.

5.5. **Employees, contractors and volunteers** are responsible for understanding and carrying out their responsibilities under this policy and having an awareness of the responsibilities of others.

6 Education and Training

6.1. Regulation 5 of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 requires that any person undertaking work at height should be competent to do so or, if being trained, supervised by a competent person. Competence is a combination of appropriate practical and theoretical knowledge, training and experience, which collectively should enable a person to:

- Undertake safely their specified activity at their level of responsibility.
- Understand fully any potential risks related to the work activity (tasks and equipment) in which they are engaged; and
- Detect any defects or omissions and recognise any implications for health and safety with the aim of specifying appropriate remedial actions that may be required in relation to their particular work activity.
- This could include refusing to do a particular task if the potential risk is assessed as being too great, pending reassessment or a risk reduction strategy.

7 Monitoring Compliance

7.1. **Health and Safety**

The Health and Safety department will follow up any related incidents and make appropriate recommendations; carry out audits of PPM records for both regulatory and Trust compliance as well as auditing equipment risk assessments. Any Working at heights issues arising from health and safety audits and inspections will be highlighted to the relevant manager.



7.2. **Non compliance**

Instances of non-compliance will be escalated to CHSWG.

8 **Audit and Review**

- 8.1. This document will be subject to audit by the CHSWG 6 months after approval and thereafter no later than three yearly.
- 8.2. Effectiveness will be reviewed using the tools set out in the Trust's Policy and Procedure for the Development and Management of Trust Policies and Procedures (also known as the Policy on Policies).
- 8.3. This document will be reviewed in its entirety every three years or sooner if new legislation, codes of practice or national standards are introduced, or if feedback from employees indicates that the policy is not working effectively.
- 8.4. All changes made to this policy will go through the governance route for development and approval as set out in the Policy on Policies.

9 **References**

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- The Construction (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1996
- The Provision and Safe Use of Work Equipment Regulations - 1998
- The Provision and Safe Use of Work Equipment Approved Code of Practice (HSE) 2014
- Safe Use of Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations - 1998
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations - 1999
- The Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations – 1992
- HSE Webpages providing practical advice and Guidance on the Working at Height regulations 2005