

Safety When Working From Heights

This procedure should be followed when working above ground level. This could include (but is not limited to) working on a step ladder and/or a raised platform.

ELIMINATE THE RISK:

Working above ground level increases the risk of falls. Even from a relatively low height, fatalities and serious injuries including fractures, spinal cord injury, concussions and brain damage can result from falls. Therefore, the first priority should always be to **eliminate any falls risks** by considering whether:

- the task can be completed on the ground to eliminate working from heights
- components and/or the majority of the task can be completed at ground level
- changes can be made in the workplace to eliminate working at a height i.e. position items at a level that does not involve working at a height and/or relocate heavy and/or frequently used items to knuckle height (when arms are by your side)

MINIMISE THE RISK – IS THERE A SAFE MEANS OF CLIMBING UP TO THE REQUIRED LEVEL?

If working above ground level cannot be eliminated, it is essential to determine whether the work area and equipment used to access heights is suitable. Remember that working above ground level **should not be attempted on sloped, uneven or unstable ground.**

When working above ground level:

- Ensure that an appropriate raised platform and/or step ladder is used, for the purpose it was designed for
- Ensure that **three points of contact are maintained**. That is, have at least two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand on the ladder and/or raised platform at all times
- Position the ladder/raised platform in front of the items to be accessed to avoid leaning and/or twisting whilst on the ladder/raised platform
- Face the ladder/raised platform when ascending and descending and getting on and off
- Do not place the ladder/ raised platform on any other surface apart from level ground
- Ensure that assistance is obtained when removing items from high places i.e. pass items to a person at ground level
- Ensure that assistance is obtained when handling heavy or unwieldy items on a ladder/raised platform i.e. ensure that a second person at ground level is stabilising the ladder/raised platform to prevent it from tipping (a third person may be required where items were also being passed down).

Prior to using a step ladder or equivalent:

- Ensure that there is sufficient space to use the ladder/raised platform – this may involve clearing the work area of any obstacles
- **Inspect the ladder** to ensure that it is secure and does not move when positioned on the ground - this may include inspecting the stability of the ladder's stoppers, or removing floor mats from the area
- Ensure that the ladder is locked securely in place
- Ensure that the ladder steps/rungs are not wet or have anything that may cause them to be slippery
- Ensure that enclosed flat shoes are worn when accessing the ladder

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

If you require assistance with determining the most appropriate solution to your working from heights scenario, please contact OHSassistance@konekt.com.au