



SOAS
University of London

Work at Height Guidance

What's it all about?

Falls from height remain the single biggest cause of workplace deaths and one of the main causes of major injury at work. A place is "at height" if a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at a very low level. This includes falling to the ground and below ground (e.g. cellars and basements). The Work at Height Regulations 2005 were introduced to help prevent injuries and deaths caused each year by falls at work.

Policy

Every effort should be made to avoid working from height.

If Work at Height cannot be avoided

Estates & Facilities staff by the uniqueness of some roles will receive the required information, instruction, training and risk assessments through their line management.

All other staff who cannot avoid "Work at Height" should take suitable and sufficient measures to make working from height tasks as safe as possible. As such the following should be undertaken:

- Staff to be provided with, and the Working at Height guidance which should be followed.
- A "Work at Height Risk assessment" with support from Line Manager and healthandsafety@soas.ac.uk if additional support required.

Work at Height guidance.

This guidance is for staff who may occasionally need to use access equipment to reach high levels. It gives advice on minimising the need to work at height and how to use access equipment safely.

Can you avoid Work at Height?

The best way to reduce the risk of a fall from height is to avoid the need to access high levels:

- Try to avoid the need to store equipment at height.
- If you do need to store items at height, only store lightweight, infrequently used items on the higher shelves and make sure you stack them securely.
- Keep clear access to windows if you need to open them, or use poles for high windows. If you can't reach your windows safely - report it.
- If you need to access high levels, use "Kick Stools" or "Safety Ladders" provided.
- Never use chairs, desks or other furniture, they are not designed to be stood upon. You could slip, or they could collapse or throw you off balance.

- If you don't have suitable access equipment or are worried about its condition, speak to your manager.

Kick Stools

A Kick stool does not have the stability issues like a step ladder and is designed not to move when you apply weight to it. You should carry out pre-use checks to ensure the wheels are running freely, there is no contamination on the wheels or steps, and rubber surfaces are stuck down securely. Also check that it locks into position when you put weight onto the kick stool. A kick stool normally has rubber on the bottom to reduce the likelihood of it slipping on the flooring. Check the rubber isn't damaged. Be prepared to move the kick stool into a new position rather than overreaching for access to an items and subsequently losing your balance.



Safety Ladders

Safety Ladders are designed to provide a safe, elevated work surface that can also move horizontally across a floor on casters or wheels. The locking mechanisms ensures the ladder does not move when a worker is standing on the elevated work surface. They are fixed height, self-supporting, and have stairs accessing a top step.

Using Safety Ladders

Safety Ladders use includes two different functions; moving the ladder stand from position to position, and as an immobilized elevated work surface. Never move the ladder while a worker is on it.

When moving the Safety Ladder:

- Ensure the ladder stand is unoccupied.
- Disengage locking mechanisms and verify the casters or wheels can move freely.
- Maintain awareness to avoid hitting objects, other elevated structures, and workers in the area.

When working on Safety Ladder stands:

- These ladders are designed for one worker to use at a time while standing. For example, accessing a book on the top shelf.
- Position the ladder stand on a smooth, flat surface.
- Engage the locking mechanisms to prevent the ladder from moving before stepping onto it.
- Ensure that steps and platforms are slip resistant.
- Keep steps and platforms clean, dry, and free of spills and debris.
- Ensure Safety Ladders are only used for the purposes for which they were designed.
- Do not use additional ladders or other objects to increase the working height.
- Do not overreach from the top step or platform.
- Do not stand on handrails or mid-rails to gain additional height.

- Keep both feet firmly on a step or platform.

Inspecting Safety Ladders

Safety Ladders are inspected by Campus Services. These inspections are documented and each mobile ladder should display a sticker with inspection dates.

In addition inspections of ladders must be conducted before they are used. If structural defects are found immediately tag "Dangerous: Do Not Use." Remove the mobile ladder stand from service until it is repaired, or replace it.

