# Working at heights risk assessment template

This risk assessment is designed to assist workplaces in managing fall hazards in the workplace. This includes activities where people are working:

* off the ground (e.g. up ladders, on work platforms, or on roofs);
* on the ground close to deep holes (e.g. excavations) edges or ledges (e.g. retaining walls);
* openings through which people could fall (e.g. skylight); or
* in areas where objects may fall from higher levels and cause injury.

Will work require staff to be on, or work on roofs?  Yes  No

**If yes: being on, or working on roofs, is prohibited in all state schools. Use a contractor instead.**

Will work be undertaken over two metres above the ground?  Yes  No

**If yes: complete a safe work method statement (SWMS) instead of this risk assessment**

Will work be undertaken 1.5 metres or more below a surface?  Yes  No

**If yes: complete a safe work method statement (SWMS) instead of this risk assessment**

**For all other work at heights activities, continue using this risk assessment.**

Use this template to:

* identify hazards and their associated risks
* assess their significance
* identify appropriate control measures in line with the five level hierarchy of control
* document and approve the activity prior to starting
* provide a summary of control measures/steps to be implemented to reduce risks associated with the activity.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Person(s) undertaking the activity:** | | | |
| **Activity description:** | | | |
| **Start Date:** | **Time:** | **Finish Date:** | **Time:** |
| **Submitted by:** | | | **Date:** |
| **Indicate the names of those who were involved in the preparation of this risk assessment:** | | | |
| **Training requirements:** | | | |
| **Supporting documentation is attached** (e.g. Work Area Access Permit (WAAP) or BEMIR approval for contractors, SOP, Chemical risk assessment, Safe work method statement).  **Details:** | | | |

## Step 1: Identify the hazards associated with your task

Identifying the hazards associated with your task is a good starting point for risk management planning. Therisk of an injury occurring will vary according to the specific hazards associated with the different elements of your task. In order to identify foreseeable hazards and their associated risk, consider these questions in relation to the factors below:

* *What is the distance of a potential fall?*
* *What is the severity of a possible injury?*
* *What task is to be done at height?*
* *How likely is it that a fall could occur?*
* *The environment, poor conditions and slippery surfaces (wind, rain, exposure)*
* *What is the expertise of those involved (competency, medical conditions etc.)?*
* *What is the duration of the activity?*
* *Where will the activity take place (set-up surfaces, proximity to doors, overhead electrical cables etc.)?*
* *What equipment will be used (including erection and dismantling)?*
* *Are there any other hazards associated with the task? e.g. environmental, manual handling, pedestrians, falling objects*

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| **Surface** | | | | | | |
| Surface type | | | | Stability/evenness | | Slope |
| Traction/grip/slipperiness | | | | Load bearing/strength | | Work area |
| Safe movement | | | | Fragile surfaces | | Access/egress |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |
| **Facilities/built environment** | | | | | | |
| Location | | Proximity | | Driveways/pathways | | Indoors |
| Buildings and fixtures | | Roofs/guttering | | Gardens/landscaping | | Retaining walls |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |
| **Machinery/plant/equipment** (refer to a completed SOP or safe work method statement) | | | | | | |
| Maintenance | Safe operation | | | Machinery (fixed/ mobile/portable) | | Ladders |
| Suitability | Hand tools | | | Trestles/Scaffold | | Vehicles/trailers |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |
| **Manual tasks** | | | | | | |
| Heights | Balance | | | Restricted space | | Fatigue |
| Over reach | Repetition | | | Heavy objects | | Vibration |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |
| **Environment** | | | | | | |
| Sun exposure/glare | | | Wind | | Water (rain/dew/frost/fog) | |
| Temperature (hot/cold) | | | Electrical storm | | Work in isolation | |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |
| **Energy systems** | | | | | | |
| Electricity (mains *and* solar) | | | LPG gas | | Gas/pressurised containers | |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **People** | | | | | |
| Falling objects | Competency/training | | Noise | | Contractors |
| Injury | Vehicle traffic | | Pedestrian traffic | | Physically capable |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | |
| **Critical incident** | | | | | |
| Rescue from fall | | Falling object | | Disruption to daily operations | |
| **Other/detail:** | | | | | |
| **Hazard controls:** | | | | | |
| **Other hazards (e.g. chemical, biological)** | | | | | |
| **Details:**  **Hazard controls:** | | | | | |

## Step 2: Assessing the inherent risk for fall from heights

Consider the nature of the activity against the indicators below to assess the inherent risk level. Risk levels may be considered medium, high or extreme – any activity where there is potential for fall from heights cannot be considered low risk. Once the risk level has been determined, follow the actions and approval required for that risk level.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall inherent risk level and indicators** | | | **Action required/approval** |
|  | **Medium** | **If a fall were to occur, there would likely be minor injury requiring no more than first aid e.g.**   * Working at a level where a fall would likely cause a minor injury. * Doing a relatively easy task for a short period of time from a stable base and secure position. * A landing surface that is free from dangerous objects. * Performing task from ground using long handled device. * Use of a ladder for a short duration for access purposes that is secured from moving and on stable ground. | * Document controls recommended and/or complete a risk assessment. No formal approval required to undertake the activity. * Use equipment designed for the task. |
|  | **High** | **If a fall were to occur, it is likely a serious injury requiring medical attention would result e.g.**   * Working at a height or accessing an area where a fall would likely cause a serious injury. * Use of a ladder for light duties that is secured from moving and on stable ground and following SOP for ladders. * Use of elevating work platforms (e.g. cherry picker), mobile scaffolds, step platforms, etc. * Using an elevated electronic signboard. * Areas with difficult access. * Poor housekeeping, wastes, debris (e.g. leaves), garden beds or stored or stacked materials where they interfere with access to work | * A documented risk assessment is required. * Principal or delegated supervisor approval is required prior to conducting this activity. * Use equipment designed for the task. |
|  | **Extreme** | **If a fall were to occur, it is likely be a serious injury requiring hospitalisation, or even death would result e.g.**   * Activities where there is a risk of falling two metres or more (measured from the person’s feet to the ground below). * Working near an unprotected open edge (e.g. close proximity to retaining walls; lift wells, loading docks). * Activities where a fall would likely result in permanent impairment or death. * Using equipment on uneven/unstable ground or working on a sloping or slippery surface where it is difficult to maintain balance (e.g. on glazed tiles). * Performing work from a ladder e.g. clean gutters, minor repairs, painting, cleaning. * Doing awkward or difficult work at height. * Working at height frequently or for extended periods of time. * Others in the vicinity that may be impacted by the activity (e.g. hit by falling objects). * Poor weather conditions. * Using equipment for purpose for which it is not designed (e.g. standing on a desk or chair to access a high shelf). * Working on an elevated fragile surface (e.g. asbestos roofing, near skylights). | Seriously consider alternatives to undertaking the activity:   * Does the task need to be done? * Is there another way to do the task that removes the extreme level of risk? * A documented risk assessment is required * Principal approval is required prior to conducting this activity. * Use equipment designed for the task. |

## Step 3: Suggested control measures for managing fall hazards

At all times, regardless of the level of risk, we are required to do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate or minimise the risk of any hazard with the potential to cause harm. Control measures are the things we do to eliminate or lower the level of risk. Listed below are recommended control measures that follow the five level hierarchy of controls for managing fall hazards. Controls are to be considered and used in this order, starting at level 1. Add details of the controls you intend to implement. You may use more than one level of control. Remember to include control measures for all the hazards you have identified

| **Recommended control measures**  Consider options in the following order: | | **Detail how the controls will be implemented.** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Level 1**  **Eliminate**  the risk of a fall | Can control measures be put in place to eliminate the risk of falling?  Does not have to be performed at all?  Can be performed less frequently in the future?  Can be performed at ground level or on a solid platform free from the risk of a fall?  Prefabricating/installing parts at ground level.  Lowering lighting to replace fittings |  |
| *If level 1 controls are not reasonably practicable or do not fully manage the risk, then consider level 2 controls.* | | |
| **Level 2**  **Use a passive fall**  **prevention device** | Can measures be put in place to isolate the risk of falling?  Employ specialized contractor to install guard rails or edge protection that provides permanent passive fall protection.  Use an elevated work platform or similar if ground conditions permit. Person in work platform must wear an anchored harness.  Person is provided with appropriate training, instruction and supervision to use EWP (or similar). |  |
| *If level 1 – 2 controls are not reasonably practicable or do not fully manage the risk, then consider level 3 controls. Roof work is not permitted for DoE staff. Schools should use contractors if level 3 controls are required.* | | |
| **Level 3**  **Use a work**  **positioning system** | Can measures be put in place to minimise the consequence of a fall?  Use rails or a catch platform.  Employ a specialized contractor to access roofs and complete work using a travel restraint system\*.  This control option demands high levels of competency and supervision and carefully selected, maintained and tested equipment. Users require ongoing training and administrative procedures need to be developed and regularly reviewed.  Consider the completion of other tasks while contractor is present e.g. installation of good quality gutter guard, gutter/ roof maintenance. | contractor |
| If level 1 – 3 controls are not reasonably practicable or do not fully manage the risk, then consider level 4 controls. *Roof work is not permitted for DoE staff. Schools should use contractors if level 4 controls are required.* | | |
| **Level 4**  **Use a fall arrest system** | Can measures be put in place to minimise the height hazard?  Employ a specialized contractor to access roofs using an individual fall arrest system^.  ^This option must also include at least one other person that is qualified to perform a rescue in case of a fall. Self-rescue is not an option as serious or fatal injuries from suspension trauma are a possible outcome. | contractor |
| If level 1 - 4 controls are not reasonably practicable or do not fully manage the risk, then consider level 5 controls. | | |
| **Level 5**  **Use a administrative control** | Can measures be put in place to minimise the consequence of a fall through administrative controls?  Use a platform ladder or trestle.  Use a step platform ladder which provides a stable work surface that is appropriate for the area.  Ladders must only be used if higher level controls are not reasonably practicable.  Use ladders in accordance with the Ladder safety safe operating procedure.  Extension ladders, single ladders or step ladders are not recommended to perform work at height that is difficult or awkward, or for performing work at height for extended periods of time.  Provide training and instruction to those working on ladders  Secure ladder  In addition to higher level controls, create a ‘no go’ zone around the area or perform task out of core hours. |  |

## Step 4: Approval for activity

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| **Approval** | | |
| **Fall control selection**: A level 1 ; 2 ; 3 ; 4 ; or 5  control measure has been selected for this activity.  **Reason why this control measure was selected (details):** | | |
|  | Approved as submitted | |
|  | Any relevant documents attached are approved. Note: an SWMS is mandatory for work over two metres above the ground or 1.5 metres or more below a surface.  A safe work method statement is not required for this task  An approved safe work method statement has been submitted as part of this assessment. | |
|  | Approved with the following condition(s): | |
|  | Not approved for the following reason(s): | |
| Approved by: | | Designation: |
| Signed: | | Date: |
| Once approved, details should be entered on MyHR WHS System. Reference No. | | |

## Step 5: Implementing, monitoring and reviewing controls

Once you have completed your risk assessment:

* A record of the controls (e.g. risk assessment) is to be kept.
* Brief each team member on this risk assessment before work begins (this includes line managers, co-workers and or contractors).
* The controls identified in the risk assessment must be implemented and adhered to. Ensure each person knows that work is to stop immediately if there is a problem with any controls or they are found to be inadequate.
* Observe the work underway. If controls are not adequate, stop the work, review the risk assessment, adjust as required and re-brief the team before recommencing work.

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| **Monitor and review (Complete during and/or after the activity)** | | **Yes** | **No** |
| Are the control measures still effective? | |  |  |
| Have there been any changes? | |  |  |
| Are further actions required? | |  |  |
| Details: | | | |
| Reviewed by: | Review Date: | | |
| Designation: | Signature: | | |

## Fall from heights pre-start checklist

Complete this checklist before you start your activity. These are administrative processes that often form an important part of the overall safety of your activity. For any items checked “No”, provide further information on the additional or alternative controls to be implemented. Add further items that are relevant to your work.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Before work commences** | **Yes** | **No** | **N/A** |
| Person has received relevant information, instruction, training to competently perform the task |  |  |  |
| Person is familiar with:   * This Risk Assessment; and/or * Safe Work Method Statement; and/or * Plant and Equipment SOPs/manufacturer instructions |  |  |  |
| Appropriate ground surface for equipment being used |  |  |  |
| Plant and/or equipment is fully functional and meets relevant standards- prestart and post activity logbook checks are completed where required.  All equipment is inspected, maintained and tested according to relevant standards  All equipment and facilities comply with relevant safety standards  Adequate space for the type of equipment being used:   * Ensure that access to equipment is restricted. * Ensure that there is a sufficient quantity of equipment available to meet the needs of the workplace. |  |  |  |
| Others in the workplace are aware the task is being undertaken. Do NOT work in isolation. |  |  |  |
| Weather conditions are appropriate for the task or equipment being used immediately prior to commencement |  |  |  |
| First aid resources (including trained staff) suitable for activity are readily available |  |  |  |
| Suitable clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment will be used |  |  |  |
| Others will not be impacted by the equipment or task (falling items, noise, fumes etc.) The activity should be conducted to minimize the impact on others e.g. perform after hours when there is no human traffic or obstructions, barricade the area or made a “No Go” zone;, e.g. performed after hours or during break time, area barricaded. |  |  |  |
| Communication system: (e.g. how can persons working at height communicate during an emergency)  mobile phone  telephone line at location  walkie talkies  adult messenger |  |  |  |
| A method to monitor the activity is in place |  |  |  |
| Appropriate signage has been posted. |  |  |  |
| Further information: |  |  |  |

## Further information

* [Workplace health and safety regulation 2011 (Qld)](https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/sl-2011-0240)
* [Managing the risk of falls at workplaces code of practice 2018](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/58171/managing-risks-falls-workplaces-cop-2018.pdf)
* [Working at heights (Under ‘Hazards and risks’ on the Creating healthier workplaces website)](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/safety/hazards)
* [Ladder safety – safe operating procedures](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/ladder-operating-procedure.pdf)