



Committee Approver	OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Stakeholder Consultation	
Date Approved	23 February 2023
Classification	Policy (sitting as an appendix to H&S Policy)
Title	Work at Height Policy
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Revised by	Head of Assets Procurement and Compliance Team Leader Asset Team Leader Health & Safety Advisor
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Related Documents	H&S Policy
Location of Electronic Copy	F:/LIVE POLICIES

1. Policy Statement

Viewpoint places a high importance on ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all employees, customers, contractors, visitors and members of the public.

Viewpoint will make sure any work at height activity under Viewpoint's control is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. This includes using the right type of equipment for working at height.

Low-risk, relatively straightforward tasks will require less effort when it comes to planning.

2. Purpose

To protect Viewpoint employees and others, so far as is reasonably practicable, from the dangers presented by working at height.

Definitions

HSE define work at height as "work in any place where, if there were no precautions in place a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury".

2.1. Work at Height Regulations

- Before any work at height is carried out, a competent person will plan and properly organise the task. This will involve the undertaking of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and where appropriate, the development of formal working procedures.
- The planning, organising and risk assessing process will take account of the following hierarchy:
 - i) avoid the need to work at height through designing out the work at height activity.

- ii) protect through the installation of guard rails or parapet wall construction
 - iii) arrest the fall with as short a potential fall distance as is practicable and the impact on the faller as low as is feasible (e.g. safety nets are favoured over harnesses).
- Where work at height is unavoidable, the following will be considered as part of the risk assessment:
 - competence of person(s) to work at height
 - selection and use of appropriate work equipment
 - the particular risks from fragile surfaces
 - inspection and maintenance of equipment
 - carry out as much work as possible from the ground
 - height of task, duration and frequency
 - safety of workers getting to and from where they work at height
 - prevention of overloading or overreaching when working at height
 - the condition of the surface being worked on
 - protection from falling objects
 - emergency evacuation and rescue procedures

2.2. Roof Work

- In addition to the requirements of 2.1, above, the following procedures will be followed for roof work.
- Only roof work of a non-extensive nature may be carried out by employees of Viewpoint. In deciding what is non-extensive work, an assessment of the time, difficulty, content of the work and number of people involved, will be made by a competent person.
- All roofs on any Viewpoint property will be considered 'fragile' unless reliable information to the contrary is available.
- Access to all roofs will be restricted to appropriately trained and competent personnel.
- Roof ladders and duck boards of sound construction must be used for roof work.
- Appropriate safety precautions, as identified by the risk assessment process, will be put in place where skylights or other fragile panels are present.
- When using safety harnesses a check must be made that there is a suitable and secure anchorage point and that there is safe access to the anchor point.
- If a skylight is being used as the means of getting onto the roof, the anchorage point must be located inside the loft.

- In all cases the anchorage point must be deemed capable of withstanding the shock of a fall.
- No roof work will be undertaken in adverse weather conditions.
- No roof top work will be undertaken if there are overhead power lines, which have not been isolated prior to work commencement.
- Work will always be planned and executed in such a way as to ensure the safety of all concerned, including the general public.

2.3. Loft Work

- In addition to the requirements of 2.1, above, the following procedures will be followed for loft work.
- All work, which requires the entry into loft space, will be conducted by at least two people. Both will be familiar with the safe working practices and with procedures to be adopted in emergency situations.
- Loft work or access to loft space will only be allowed if a suitable boarded passageway exists or if duck boards can be placed across roof joists or beams.
- This will also be the case if the loft and a skylight are being used as the access route to the roof. A small platform will require to be constructed under the skylight before this procedure can be followed.
- It must be ensured that an adequate source of light and ventilation is available inside the loft before entering the loft space.
- Employees will wear appropriate PPE when entering loft spaces.
- If MMMF is evident in the loft space, then it is recommended that minimal disturbance of insulation is made and goggles should be worn in addition to a CE marked dust respirator.
- Upon leaving loft spaces, which contain MMMF, in order to prevent skin irritation the skin should be rinsed in lukewarm water prior to using soap.
- No hot work will be carried out in the loft space unless adequately covered in the Risk Assessment.
- Asbestos materials may be present in the loft as lagging on hot water tanks or hot water pipes, thermal insulation material or asbestos boards. The asbestos register should be consulted prior to entering the loft/s. Where such materials are suspected of containing asbestos, are friable or damaged or are to be disturbed, a professional assessment of the materials should be carried out by an accredited asbestos-testing firm.

2.4. Ladders

- Ladders used by Viewpoint personnel will be suitable for the task, British Standard Class 1 'Industrial' or BSEN131 and should be of sound construction with no missing steps or rungs and will remain unpainted so that cracks and other faults can be easily recognised.
- A system will be put in place to ensure ladders are visually inspected before and after use, looking out for bent or damaged stiles, missing worn damaged or dirty feet, bent worn missing or loose rungs, bent or worn locking mechanisms, check for splits or buckles on the ladder platform, check steps and treads on stepladders for contamination or loose fittings.
- The system will ensure defective ladders are removed from use, labelled and a request for repair or replacement submitted to the line manager. Where it is not possible to repair a ladder, it will be destroyed as soon as reasonably practicable. A Ladder Inspection Report will be completed for each ladder on a monthly basis.
- Ladders in use must be positioned at the correct angle (four up for one out) on a firm base and be tied at the top for support. The ladder will be supported by a second person until tied. Alternatively, if the ladder cannot be tied, a second person will act to 'foot' the bottom of the ladder and act as a look-out.
- Ladders should not be overloaded, person's weight and equipment being carried should be checked against ladder restrictions prior to working at height and not more than one person at a time will be allowed on a ladder.
- If the ladder is the actual work platform, then the ladder should extend at least 1.50m above the highest rung on which the employee has to stand. Pole ladders (i.e. single section ladders with the stiles made from a single pole cut lengthways) will only be used for gaining access and will not be used as working platforms. When using step-ladders, the user will not use the top step as a platform.
- Where using a ladder to gain access to a work platform, the ladder will extend at least 1m above the landing place. The landing rung should be level with or slightly above the landing platform. There should be space between each rung for a proper foothold, ensuring that there are no obstructions to the foot.
- Ladders will not be climbed higher than the third rung from the top.
- Short ladders may be carried by one person, either vertically against the shoulder or horizontally across the shoulder. Longer ladders will be carried horizontally on the shoulders of two people, one either end, in as comfortable a manner as possible. Care should be taken to avoid overhead hazards (such as power lines).

- As over-reaching or stretching whilst on a ladder can lead to loss of balance, if the work area cannot be reached, the ladder will be moved, or a longer one used, to allow the work area to be reached safely.
- After use, ladders will be cleaned. Ladders will not be stored outside unless adequately covered and will be hung horizontally on a rack (supported under the stiles) or supported on blocks (under the stiles). They will not be supported by the rungs, stored flat on the ground or placed against walls, radiators or hot pipes, which can lead to warping, sagging or distortion.
- Three points of contact should be maintained when climbing and working on ladders.

3. Legislation/related policies

Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999, as amended

Work at Height Regulations 2005, as amended

Confined Spaces Regulations 1997

Health & Safety in Roof Work – HSE Guidance Note HSG 33

INDG401 (Rev 2) Working at Height, a brief guide

LA455 Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders - a brief guide

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all work at height.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Board

The role of Viewpoint's Board is to ensure that this policy, as well as any associated policies, are regularly reviewed, as required, or in accordance with the usual cycle of policy review.

The Board will, in fulfilling its function, ensure that it complies as necessary with this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it.

Executive and Leadership Teams

The role of the Executive and Leadership Teams is responsibility for ensuring that this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it, are implemented within Viewpoint.

The Executive and Leadership Teams shall ensure that procedures are in place and operating. The Executive and Leadership Teams shall also ensure that relevant managers and team members familiarise themselves with this policy, and the associated policies, procedures and documentation which support it, and ensure it is fully implemented. Any associated training must be undertaken.

Staff

All staff are responsible for ensuring that they familiarise themselves with this policy, as well as undertaking any associated training.

6. Monitoring & Evaluation

To ensure this policy remains current and effective it will be reviewed every 3 years or where a need is identified by monitoring methods, for example through audits, inspections or incident reports.