

# ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## Working at Height – Practical Guidance for Departments

The following pages give examples of generic good practice and should be adapted to suit the specific work being undertaken following a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

Task requiring working at height	What could go wrong	Generic good practice
Putting up displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whilst using wrong equipment (table, desk, chair, books) gives way when person stands on it.</li> <li>▪ Person using ladder/step ladder over reaches causing ladder to topple over</li> <li>▪ Another person walks into ladder causing it to topple over</li> <li>▪ Person on ladder/stepladder drops display on person below them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Restrict displays to head height</li> <li>▪ Consider room layout to ensure that display boards are easily accessible</li> <li>▪ Ensure that displays are prepared as far as possible before being put up</li> <li>▪ Staff (and others in the Department) instructed not to climb on chairs, tables or other furniture to access display boards</li> <li>▪ Arrangements for safety are discussed and agreed with staff, and recorded as part of staff meetings/briefings</li> <li>▪ Provide equipment which is suitable for users to enable safe access to display areas (e.g. kick step type stools and properly designed low steps with hand rails)</li> <li>▪ Areas where ladders and other access equipment is to be used is clearly defined by use of signs and barriers</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and readily available</li> <li>▪ Frequent documented checks take place to ensure the safe working condition of access equipment</li> <li>▪ Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited</li> <li>▪ The use of ladders and other access equipment is restricted to those persons trained and competent in safe use</li> <li>▪ Where persons have pre-existing medical conditions or other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place</li> <li>▪ Instruct staff to wear appropriate footwear (heel-less or low heeled shoes with non-slip soles)</li> </ul>
<p>Placing or retrieving items stored above head height</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person knocked in head by falling items when replacing items on a high shelf</li> <li>▪ Shelf collapses causing items to fall on person</li> <li>▪ Use of wrong equipment and inappropriate use of correct equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement a 'heavy box low shelf' policy</li> <li>▪ Review storage so that frequently needed items are accessible</li> <li>▪ Loose items must not be stored in high places</li> <li>▪ Provide proper equipment for the task</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Train people in the safe use of equipment</li> <li>▪ All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and readily available</li> <li>▪ Frequent documented checks take place to ensure the safe working condition of access equipment</li> <li>▪ Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited</li> <li>▪ Where persons have pre-existing medical conditions or other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place</li> <li>▪ Instruct staff to wear appropriate footwear (heel-less or low heeled shoes with non-slip soles)</li> </ul>
Opening and closing windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person falls off ledge whilst opening window</li> <li>▪ Person falls from unprotected window</li> <li>▪ Poorly maintained window falls out of frame striking person standing underneath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Install remote means of opening high windows (e.g. long handled poles or mechanical openers)</li> <li>▪ Fit window opening limiters to all windows above ground level</li> <li>▪ Ensure windows and doors are maintained in safe condition</li> </ul>

Shelf stacking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whilst using wrong equipment (table, desk, chair, books) gives way when person stands on it</li> <li>▪ Person using ladder/step ladder over reaches causing ladder to topple over</li> <li>▪ Another person walks into ladder causing it to topple over</li> <li>▪ Person on ladder/stepladder drops item on person below them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan to store heavy or large items at the bottom and smaller, lighter items higher up</li> <li>▪ Put frequently used items in an easily accessible area</li> <li>▪ If there is a risk of anything falling that could injure someone, make sure no-one comes into the area below the work</li> <li>▪ Take frequent breaks, especially when working from a ladder. Do not work from a ladder for more than 30 minutes at a time</li> <li>▪ If using a ladder keep three points of contact</li> <li>▪ Don't carry loads more than 10kg</li> <li>▪ Make sure the people who will be doing the task, have the right skills, experience and training to use the equipment safely and have been consulted about the right equipment to use</li> </ul>
Unloading a vehicle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person falls off vehicle while unloading materials</li> <li>▪ Person drops materials that need to be unloaded injuring person walking passed vehicle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you don't need to work at height to unload the vehicle then don't!</li> <li>▪ When it is there always use safety equipment, such as guard rails and work restraint</li> <li>▪ Don't walk backwards when on vehicle</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Don't jump off vehicle</li> <li>▪ Keep the vehicle tidy at all times</li> <li>▪ Make sure the people who will be doing the job have the right skills, experience and training to use the equipment safely and have been consulted about the right equipment to use</li> </ul>
<p>Falls from height during drama and theatre productions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student/staff member falls from mobile tower scaffold when changing stage lights</li> <li>▪ Item falls from gantry area onto audience</li> <li>▪ Stage light falls during adjusting and strikes another person</li> <li>▪ Person climbs up outside of tower scaffold which overturns and injures them</li> <li>▪ Scaffold collapses during use due to unsafe erection</li> <li>▪ Person falls through open trap door</li> <li>▪ Fall from stage during production</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consideration of installing lighting rigs which can be lowered to ground level to reduce the need for working at height</li> <li>▪ Staff and students trained in safe use of access equipment by competent trainer</li> <li>▪ Written health and safety procedures detailing safe arrangements for adjusting lights, working on gantry and other related activities. Arrangements communicated to all those who may be involved.</li> <li>▪ Provide equipment which is suitable to the users to enable access to theatre/studio areas (mobile tower access scaffold, stepladders, ladders and mobile elevated working platforms).</li> <li>▪ All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Frequent documented checks take place to ensure safe working condition of access equipment</li><li>▪ Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited</li><li>▪ Access equipment is restricted to those competent in its safe use</li><li>▪ Where staff, students or others have pre-existing medical conditions or other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place</li><li>▪ Access to backstage/gantry and other areas are restricted at all times and especially when stage is set for production</li><li>▪ Gantry areas, scaffolds, etc. have appropriate edge protection and handrails which are subject to frequent documented checks</li><li>▪ Create an exclusion zone where necessary beneath areas where work is taking place</li></ul>
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