

## PREVENTION OF FALLS PROCEDURE

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### 1 **PURPOSE**

The objective of these procedures is to stipulate the actions which must be taken to prevent people falling and to reduce injury as a result falling when working at more than 2 metres.

These procedures do not apply to

- Theatrical performances, sporting or athletic activities, bike or horse riding
- Tasks being undertaken on stairs, ramps, balconies and which are being used for the purpose that they are intended, including fixed ladders for access and egress.
- The design of walkways, stairwells or platforms.

These procedures apply to all work undertaken above two metres and apply to all employees and contractors of the University

### 2. **DEFINITIONS**

#### **Fall**

A person's involuntary fall of more than 2 metres.

#### **Fall hazard**

Where there is a potential to fall.

#### **Fall Injury Prevention System**

Equipment or material or a combination of equipment and material that is designed to arrest the fall of a person. Such as safety net, catch platform or safety harness system other than a travel restraint system.

#### **Hierarchy of Control**

The Hierarchy of Control is the established priority order for the types of measures to be used to control risks. In order of a) Elimination of hazard, b) Substitute with a lesser hazard, c) Modify the work system or process, d) Isolate the hazard, e) Use engineering controls; f) Administrative or backup controls such as personal protective equipment, warning signage.

#### **Job Safety Analysis (JSA) / Safe Operating Practice (SOP)**

A documented process as to how a task is to be performed.

#### **Passive Fall Prevention**

Is material or equipment or a combination thereof that is designed for prevention falls and, after initial installation, does not require any ongoing adjustment, alteration or operation by any person to ensure the device's integrity. E.g. fixed work platform, cherry pickers, step platform, building maintenance units, scaffolding, guard railing safety mesh, special forklifts-order picking forklifts.

#### **Scaffold**

A temporary structure for supporting access platforms or walking platforms. These include free standing, independent portable or mobile.

#### **Solid Construction**

A surface that is capable of supporting any people or material that may be on it; barriers around its perimeter and any open penetrations to prevent a fall from the area; an even and readily negotiable surface and gradient; a safe means of access and egress.

**Temporary Work Platform**

A platform used to provide a working area only for the duration of work carried out at height, and which by its design prevents persons from falling. Temporary work platforms include scaffolds, fixed mobile or suspended, elevated work platforms mast climbing work platforms, work box supported by cranes hoists forklift trucks or mechanical plant, building maintenance equipment industrial rope access systems or portable or mobile fabricated platforms.

**Theatrical Performance**

Means acting, singing, playing a musical instrument, dancing, or other wise performing literary or artistic works or expressions of folklore.

**Travel Restraint System**

Equipment that is worn by or attached to a person and is designed for the purpose of physically restraining a person from reaching an edge or elevated surface from which he or she may fall.

**Unprotected Edge**

The edge of a surface from which there is a horizontal gap, void or space of more than 300mm and which is not provided with a barrier to prevent a fall.

**Work Positioning System**

An industrial rope access system, a drainers hoist, a travel restraint system any equipment other than a temporary work platform that enables a person to be positioned and safely supported at work location for the duration of the task being undertaken at height.

**3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 3.1 All Deans, Divisional Managers, Heads of Academic and Administrative Departments and Colleges responsible for work undertaken at a height above 2 metres shall ensure that
- a) As far as practicable work is performed on the ground or a solid construction. If this is not practicable all fall hazards must be identified and risks of fall be reduced.
  - b) All activities are resourced to the extent necessary to protect the health and safety of persons either performing or affected by those activities.
  - c) Staff required to work at height are consulted about risk assessment and control measures.
  - d) Provide training and information to employees about fall hazards and the use of risk control measures.
  - e) Equipment used to control the risk of fall is designed and constructed for the task and the working environment which it is to be used.
  - f) Emergency procedures are established to enable the rescue of an employee in the event of a fall occurring and the provision of first aid as soon as possible after the emergency occur.
  - g) Consult with employees about the risks and control
  - h) Develop Job Safety Analysis/Safe Operating practice for tasks where employees are required to work a height.
- 3.2 Employees must carry out tasks in accordance with information instruction and training given including JSA and or SOP and use any risk control measures put in place or provided.

## 4. PROCEDURE

### GENERAL

Where work is to be undertaken within 2 metres of an unprotected edge, or on a sloping surface or slippery surface, including travelling to and from the task risk identification and assessment process must be undertaken.

#### Basic steps to preventing falls from height

1. Identify all fall hazards
2. Assess risks and situations where someone may fall from a height.
3. Review safety measures needed to prevent a fall or minimise the risk.
4. Implement fall prevention measures.
5. Ensure emergency procedures are in place in case of a fall.
6. Ensure plant and prevention measures are adequate and maintained.
7. Check risk assessments and safety measures at every site and as the situation

#### Fall Hazards Examples.

- Work being done on a fragile surface such as skylights, badly rusted corrugated iron, or fibreglass roofs, with no guarding, safety mesh, catch platforms, or alternative fall protection measures in place.
- Mezzanine levels used for extra storage space and there are no guards or hand rails installed.
- Boom type elevating work platforms such as cherry pickers, travel towers, boom lifts etc. being used with no secure line and safety harness in place connecting the worker to the basket to reduce the risk of a fall from the basket.
- Maintenance work being done from a roof such as gutter clearing, painting or roof restoration and there's no guarding or fall protection measures used.
- Work being done from the bucket on a front end loader or tractor or from a pallet lifted by a forklift.
- No guarding, railing or signage around holes, pits or shafts.
- Unsecured, loose or incomplete scaffolds or railing in a place near to where workers are working or likely to work in the near future.
- A person being lifted up by a piece of equipment or plant not designated for the job.
- Where ropes, harnesses and lanyards are being used for fall protection, the equipment is not checked regularly and before use. The equipment shows evidence of either rust, decay, cracks, knots, rips or a combination of these. The equipment used in the system is not designed for the job.
- Anchorage points used are inadequate in terms of location, strength and with no regard for effect of a fall (no regard for the pendulum effect if someone falls).
- Workers not provided with adequate training, instruction and supervision in how to set up, undertake and complete a task that involves work at height or a use fall prevention equipment safely.
- Ladders are being used in unintended ways. E.g. using an ordinary straight ladder as a horizontal working platform or subjecting a ladder to loads over the ladder's load rating.
- Using an ordinary, straight ladder to put away or get stock from racks or shelving.

### 4.1 IDENTIFICATION

To identify a hazard the following questions need to be asked. Is the task being undertaken,

- Near an edge, hole pit or shaft.
- On a sloping or slippery surface. Plant or structure being constructed, demolished, inspected, tested, maintained, repaired or cleaned.
- On a fragile or potentially unstable surface.
- Where equipment is used to gain access.

#### **4.2 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Where the task has been identified of risk of a fall from height consideration is to be given to the circumstances that may increase the risk of fall. Assessments must involve looking at how work is done, how often, the conditions or physical surroundings where the work is undertaken and consultation with relevant Health and Safety Representatives.

##### Things To Be Considered:

- the nature, size and layout of the workplace,
- the duration, extent and type of work to be undertaken,
- the height workers will be required to work at,
- training and experience of employees undertaking the work,
- the terrain, travel distance and ease of access for equipment
- Movement of people and plant at work site, condition of work.

If an assessment shows a risk of a fall from height, or if work is to be conducted at a height of more than 2 metres, then by law precautions need to be put in place to stop someone falling.

#### **4.3 RISK CONTROL**

Where a risk of fall has been identified and assessed control measures to eliminate the fall must be implemented using the following hierarchy of control, in order of 1-5.

1. Where practicable arrange work to be conducted on the ground or a solid construction.
2. Can passive fall prevention device be used? Such as work platform, scaffolding
3. Can a work positioning system be used, such as rope access system or travel restraint system.
4. Can a fall prevention system be used/ such as safety net, fall arrest harness.
5. If none of the above measures are reasonably practicable or do not minimise the risk of a fall then a fixed or portable ladder or administrative control must be used. Arrange work to be on a solid surface. Note if administrative controls are used then a record must be kept in relation to the task.

#### **5. INFORMATION INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING**

All persons required to undertake any task identified as involving a fall hazard, must be provided with information, instruction and training to enable them to perform the task safely. Training must include the nature of the risk of injury associated with the task, safety measures including safe operating practices, emergency procedures and first aid.

#### **6. CONSULTATION**

Where practicable when undertaking identification, assessment and control of risks the Health and Safety Representative of the Designated Work Group should be consulted about identification, assessment and control processes.

## **7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

Where an employee is working at a height of 2 metres or above emergency procedures for the rescue of the employee and the provision of first aid in the event of a fall must be implemented. These emergency procedures are to be carried out as soon as possible after the emergency situation arises.

## **8. REFERENCES**

Occupational Health and Safety (Prevention of Falls) Regulations 2003, Regulation 205, (1), 208, 209, 303

OH&S (Plant) Regulations 1995

Victorian WorkCover Authority. Basic steps to preventing falls. First edition 2005.

## **9. CROSS REFERENCES**

LaTrobe University Risk Identification Assessment and Control Procedure.  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/hr/ohs/ohs-manual/risk-assessment.pdf>

La Trobe University Permits to work procedure.  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/hr/ohs/ohs-manual/work-permits.pdf>

OHS Ladder Safety Guidelines  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/hr/ohs/ohs-manual.htm#guidelines>

This procedure, was endorsed by the Executive Occupational Health and Safety Committee at its meeting on 3 March 2003.

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