

SNOWDONIA NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Work at Height Safety Policy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 A number of Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA) staff regularly work at height. It is our policy to ensure that these staff and any visitors etc. are not placed at any extra risk as a result of their job role.
- 1.2 In order to achieve this, a risk assessment will be carried out before any work at height is undertaken. Following this, the most suitable control measures for each individual job will be introduced as are necessary.
- 1.3 It should be noted that work at height refers to all work carried out where there is a risk of a fall, and not just those activities involving heights of two metres or more.

2. Who does this policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to all SNPA staff and volunteers (all are referred to as 'employees' in this policy).

3. The legal position

- 3.1 This policy has been developed to help SNPA meet the duties placed upon it by the Work at Height Regulations (WAHR) 2005 as below:
 - All work activities carried out at height must be properly planned and organised.
 - A risk assessment is undertaken to assess the tasks involved.
 - Following this assessment, the appropriate work equipment is selected and used.
 - All those working at height are competent to do so.
 - Any risks from fragile roof surfaces are properly controlled.
 - And, where equipment is used for work at height, it will be inspected and well-maintained.

4. Control measures

- 4.1 SNPA will implement the necessary control measures to ensure that the risks of working at height will be reduced, so far as is reasonably practicable. This will also include ensuring access and egress (exit) from the work place.
- 4.2 Wherever possible, the need to work at height will be avoided, though in many instances, it is recognised that this is not possible. If this is the case, it is SNPA policy that the following control measures will be implemented.

Safe site access / egress

SNPA will take steps to ensure that those working on the site can access and leave it safely. This includes vehicle access, the bringing of materials onto and off the site and the need to protect other staff, visitors or contractors from our activities.

Choice of access equipment

When selecting access equipment WAHR require us to consider collective fall prevention measures over individual ones e.g. the use of scaffolding in preference to safety harnesses. Therefore, in making the selection, a number of factors need to be considered, including the following:

- The prevailing working conditions and any space constraints
- The nature of the risks involved for those carrying out the work
- The distances involved in transporting the access equipment on site
- The distances and consequences of a potential fall
- How often the equipment is to be used and for what duration
- The need for an easy and timely evacuation and / or rescue in the event of an emergency
- Any additional risks posed by the use, installation or removal of the work equipment

Fall protection

Where access equipment involves work platforms and edges from which workers can fall; guard rails, toe boards and other barriers (as appropriate) will be used.

Fragile roofs

Where work is carried out on roof surfaces, the Authority will make all reasonable enquiries to identify if this work involves a roof composed of fragile materials e.g. those which are not load bearing. If this is the case, all necessary precautions will be taken to ensure that staff can carry out the work safely e.g. by the use of crawl boards and safety nets suspended under the fragile surface. In the event that the composition of the roof is unknown, it will be assumed that it is a fragile surface and precautions will be taken accordingly.

Supervision

Staff will be supervised as necessary in order to ensure that any access equipment used is set up in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Supervisors will also ensure that safe working practices are adopted at all times.

Hired equipment

Any equipment which is hired, such as mobile access towers will be thoroughly checked before assembly and use.

5. Use of ladders

- 5.1 Whilst the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has not banned the use of ladders, it does not consider them to be appropriate if other safer options could be used instead.
- 5.2 As required by the WAHR, a risk assessment will be carried out in order to determine whether there are alternatives and if they are practicable in a given situation.
- 5.3 Since the WAHR were introduced, it's likely that ladders will only be suitable for (i) Low risk activities; and (ii) work of a short duration.

6. Safety harness

- 6.1 As personal fall protection, safety harnesses are only to be used as a measure of last resort, e.g. if access via a safer means is not possible. However, a risk assessment must first be carried out in order to determine whether work can be carried out safely with safety harness.
- 6.2 If such use is required, staff will not only be trained in how use and attach them safely, but in how to check that the equipment remains safe to use.

7. Employee duties

- 7.1 All employees are expected to adopt safe working practices at all times and to follow any instruction made for their safety and that of their colleagues. Employees are also expected to assemble and use any work equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and their training.
- 7.2 If any defects are found, they should be reported to the line manager / Head of Service.

8. Training

- 8.1 As work at heights may involve the use of different means of access, the Authority requires that all staff that are required to use such equipment first receive training on its safe use. This may be on-the-job or with an external trainer, as appropriate.

9. Maintenance and inspection

- 9.1 All equipment used for work at height will be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and any current legislative requirements.
- 9.2 Employees are also expected to make visual inspections of this equipment before it is used.
- 9.3 Any further inspection which is required by statute will also be carried out by an appropriately qualified individual.

Further Information

HES: INDG 401 (rev 2) Working at Height

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