

# The Glasgow School of Art

## GSA Work at Height Procedure

March 2019

### Policy Control

Title	GSA Work at Height Procedure
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Approving Bodies	Occupational Health and Safety Committee
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Supersedes	GSA Compliance Guidelines Working at Height Guidance; GSA Working at Height Guidance Note
Supporting Policy	Occupational Health and Safety Policy; Occupational Health and Safety Policy: Arrangements; GSA Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure; GSA Guide to Safe Use of Ladders and Low Level Access Equipment
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<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Definitions	3 – 4
3.1 – Work at Height	3 - 4
3.2 – Work at Height Equipment	4
4. Roles and Responsibilities	4 – 5
4.1 – Heads of Schools and Professional Support Areas	4
4.2 – Heads of Departments, Programme Leaders and Equivalent in Professional Support Areas	4 - 5
4.3 – Staff and Students	5
5. Risk Assessment	5 - 6
6. Training and Competency	6
7. Choosing the Correct Equipment	6 - 7
7.1 – Ladders and Low Level Equipment	6
7.2 - Other Work at Height Equipment	7
7.3 - Pre-Use Inspections	7
8. Falling Objects and Dangerous Areas	7
9. Further information	7
• Appendix 1: Work at Height Flowchart	8
• Appendix 2: Work at Height Step by Step Diagram	9

## **1. Introduction**

Falls from height are one of the biggest causes of workplace fatalities and major injuries. GSA has a legal obligation to comply with the Work at height Regulations 2005 (WAHR), ensuring that employees and students are protected from falls from height.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all staff, students and contractors avoid working at height, where possible, and implement suitable and sufficient controls where it cannot be avoided. This includes ensuring the safety of those who may be impacted by the work at height e.g. those working beneath the work at height activity.

Any work on the roofs of GSA buildings – whether for maintenance or other reasons – must be approved by the Head of Estates, or a delegated nominee. Access to roof areas will only be granted to staff or contractors who possess appropriate qualifications and/or experience in relation to the type of roof and the nature of the work being carried out. The Estates Department will retain a written copy of any granted access.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with GSA's Guide to Safe Use of Ladders and Low Level Access Equipment, which can be found on the GSA webpage.

These documents outline measures that are in place to protect the health and safety of all staff, students and members of the public, ensuring that GSA remains inclusive and accessible to all. Any student/member of staff requiring any support in relation to this procedure should speak to their Programme Leader/Line Manager in the first instance.

The appendices to this procedure contain further information and tools to assist in the successful management of work at height. These are:

*Appendix 1: Work at Height Flowchart*

*Appendix 2: Work at Height Step by Step Diagram*

## **2. Scope**

This procedure sets out what all GSA staff and students have to do in order to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable, any person falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

## **3. Definitions**

### **3.1 Work at height**

Work at Height refers to work in any place where, without suitable and sufficient controls in place, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. This includes any work:

- Above ground/floor level
- Where a person could fall from an edge through an opening or fragile surface or
- Where a person could fall from ground/floor level into an opening in a floor or a hole in the ground

Specific requirements of the Work at Height Regulations (2005) are that:

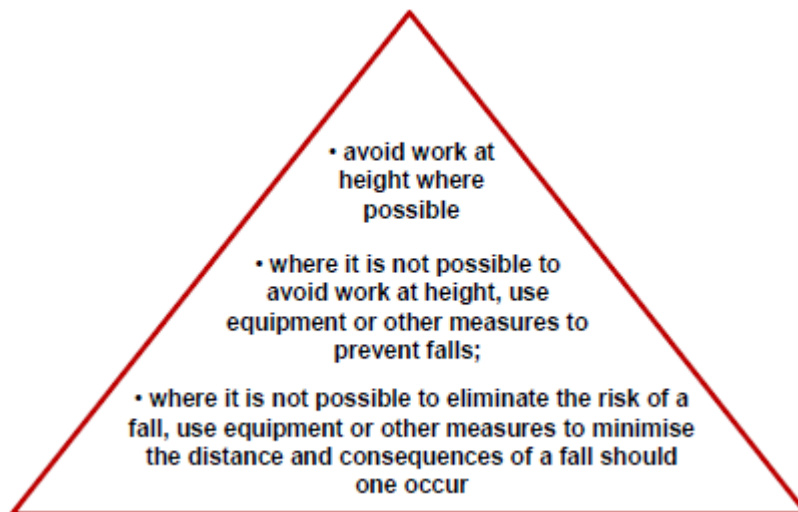
- All work at height is properly planned, supervised and conducted
- The risks from work at height are assessed and appropriate work equipment is selected and used
- The place where the work will be carried out is safe
- Weather conditions have been taken into account
- Those involved in work at height are trained and competent
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled
- Equipment for work at height is properly inspected and maintained

### **3.2 Work at Height equipment**

Applies to any machinery, appliance, apparatus, tool or installation for use at work.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The following hierarchy must be followed by all staff and students working at height within GSA:



The specific roles and responsibilities for working at height are detailed below.

### **4.1 Heads of Schools and Professional Support Areas**

Heads of Schools and Professional Support Areas have responsibility to ensure that, within their area of responsibility, everything that is reasonably practicable is done – including the completion of suitable and sufficient risk assessments - before working at height commences.

### **4.2 Heads of Departments, Programme Leaders and equivalent in Professional Support Areas**

Heads of Departments, Programme Leaders and their equivalent in Professional Support Areas must

ensure that working at height is carried out in a safe manner, so far as is reasonably practicable. This includes following the hierarchy of control measures and justifying the work at height in the relevant risk assessment and ensuring relevant training has been given. Heads of Departments, Programme Leaders and their equivalent in Professional Support Areas must also ensure that the work has been risk assessed and that the work at height is supervised, making sure that risk assessments remain valid. This will also enable any additional training needs to be identified.

#### **4.3 Staff and Students**

All staff and students must:

- Comply with any procedure or instructions for working at height
- Ensure that you have received appropriate training for working at height (see Section 6)
- Use equipment provided in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and any training that has been delivered
- Report any activity that is likely to endanger yourself or others

#### **5. Risk Assessment**

Risk assessment is essential to good risk management, and must be carried out only by nominated competent persons. GSAs Health and Safety Risk Assessment Procedure outlines the legal requirement for risk assessment and can be found on the GSA webpage.

Every task that involves working at height – or where a person could fall through a fragile material – should be risk assessed. The Working at Height Flowchart – please see Appendix 1 - outlines the overall procedure for risk assessing work at height activities. Both regular and irregular activities associated with the task or activity should be considered when carrying out a general risk assessment. Where it is identified that the work at height operation involves occasional or sporadic activities which fall outside the parameters of the general risk assessment, a more detailed and specific risk assessment should be carried out. The specific risk assessment should consider the following:

- The activity – including loading (weights, dimensions of materials)
- The means of accessing and working at height e.g. selecting the correct equipment
- The condition and stability of the work surfaces
- The duration of the work
- The equipment that will be used at height e.g. tools and their weight
- The need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- The environment (e.g. weather, temperature, lighting)
- The physical condition of the people involved (e.g. age, fitness, pregnant etc.)
- The training, competence and supervision of the people undertaking work at height
- Emergency procedures including, where appropriate, rescue plans

When the risk assessment has been completed and it has been determined that the task can be undertaken – so far as is reasonably practicable – the task should be planned properly, taking into consideration the following:

- Plan to do as much of the work as possible at ground level

- Ensure those working at height can get safely to and from where the work is being done
- Ensure equipment is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job
- Ensure equipment is properly maintained and checked regularly
- Make sure you do not overload or overreach when working at height
- Take precautions when working on or near fragile surfaces
- Provide protection from falling objects, with a 'safe perimeter' in place around the work site and appropriate notices/signage displayed
- If the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, consider the need to use fall arrest equipment, particularly if working on or over fragile/dangerous surfaces
- Make sure work platforms and any edges from which people may fall (e.g. roofs, holes in platforms), have guard-rails and toe boards or other secure barriers

Any risk assessment should also include contingency (emergency) arrangements for foreseeable problems, should things go wrong. The result of the risk assessments should be communicated to relevant staff/students.

## **6. Training and Competency**

Heads of Schools and their equivalent in Professional Support Areas are responsible for ensuring that all GSA employees who are required to work at height as part of their role have received training in accordance with the range of tasks and equipment they are required to use. Those responsible for managing work at height must ensure that employees carrying out these tasks receive sufficient information, instruction and supervision necessary for them to work safely. All GSA employees who are required to work at height should be aware of the contents of the risk assessment, and the measures identified to reduce and control the risks present.

## **7. Choosing the Correct Equipment**

Equipment for working at height must be suitable and provide the correct protection. When selecting equipment to work at height, employers must:

- Provide the most suitable equipment appropriate for the work. Appendix 2 – Work at Height Step by Step diagram – can assist what equipment is most suitable
- Take accounts of factors such as:
  - the working conditions (e.g. weather)
  - the nature, frequency and duration of the work (e.g. for long duration work, scaffolding may be more appropriate than a ladder)
  - the risks to the safety of everyone where the work equipment will be used (this includes those working at height and those in the surrounding areas who may be affected by the work)
- Consider the maintenance of the work equipment

### **7.1 Ladders and Low Level Equipment**

Specific information on some of the different types of Work at Height equipment which can be used within GSA can be found in GSA's Guide to Safe Use of Ladders and Low Level Access Equipment. This can be accessed on the GSA webpage.

## 7.2 Other Work at Height Equipment

If you require use of other work at height equipment – for example Mobile Elevate Work Platform (MEWP) or scaffolding – for more complex or long-duration tasks, please contact the Estates Department.

## 7.3 Pre-use Inspections

When the correct equipment has been selected, the user should carry out a visual pre-use inspection before commencing work, if competent to do so. This will enable identification of any obvious defects and will ensure the equipment is safe to use. Pre-use inspections should be carried out by the user, at the beginning of the working day (before the task commences) and after something has changed (e.g. if the equipment is moved to a different location for use).

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 require employers to keep a record of any inspection of work equipment – including the work at height equipment itself, and any supporting equipment such as guard rails/toe-boards etc. The GSA Ladder Pre-Use Inspection Checklist – which can be found on the website – should be used to record findings when carrying out visual inspections.

Any work at height equipment which is found to be faulty or have any defects should be taken out of use immediately and labelled appropriately until repaired or replaced.

## 8. Falling Objects and Danger Areas

The person responsible for the work at height must ensure that:

- The fall of people, material or objects is prevented (e.g. through the use of toe-boards, netting etc.)
- Where it is not reasonable practical to prevent falling materials or objects, steps are taken to prevent such materials hitting persons below
- Danger areas – where there is a risk of people being struck by falling objects (including persons falling from height) – are demarcated and entry by unauthorised persons is prohibited

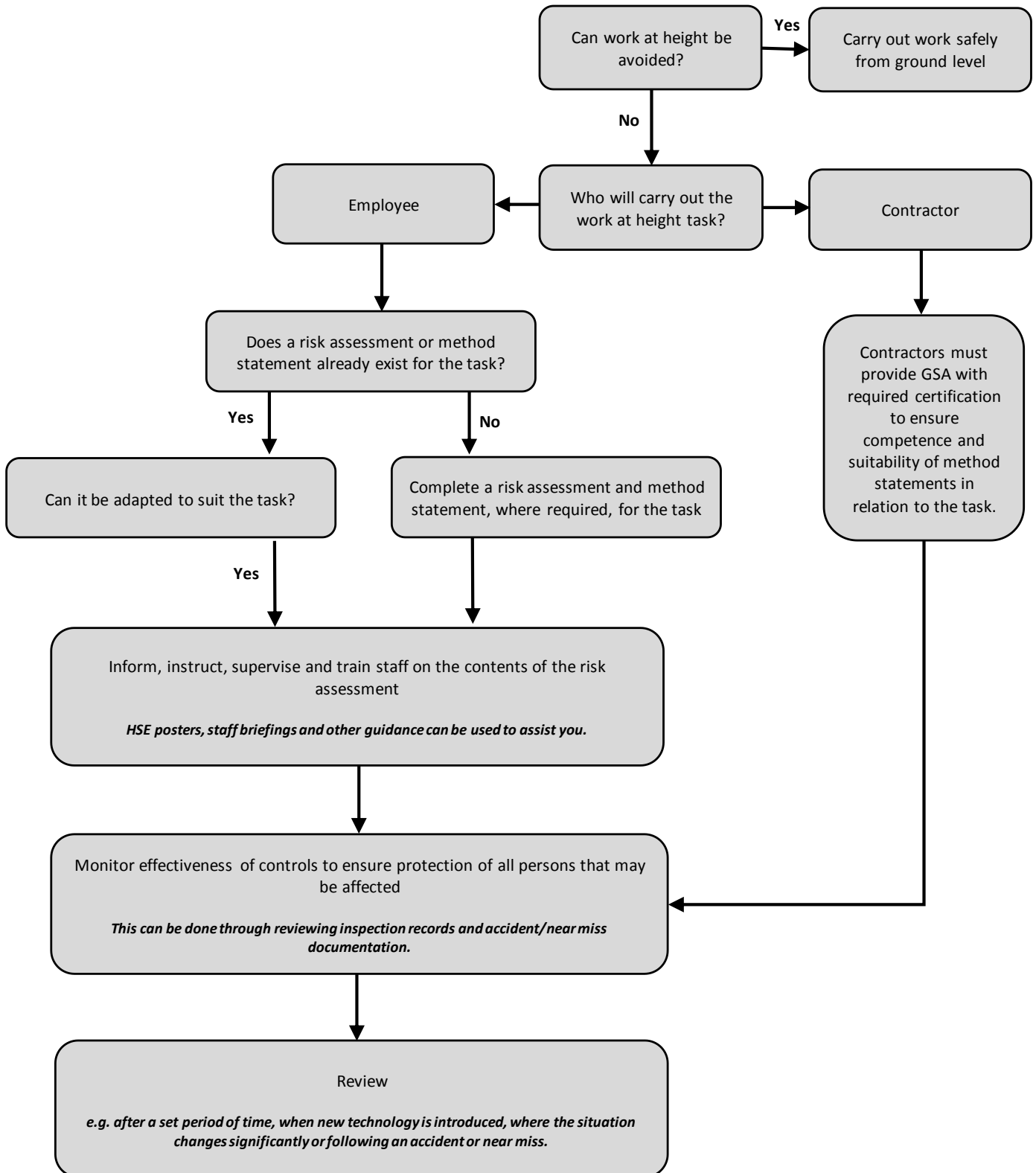
## 9. Further Information

For further information, you should refer to relevant GSA guidance, which can be accessed on the GSA webpage here: <http://www.gsa.ac.uk/about-gsa/key-information/occupational-health-and-safety/> Specifically, **GSA's Guide to Safe Use of Ladders and Low Level Access Equipment** will be of assistance.

There is also a wide range of other publications and materials available online. Links below for information:

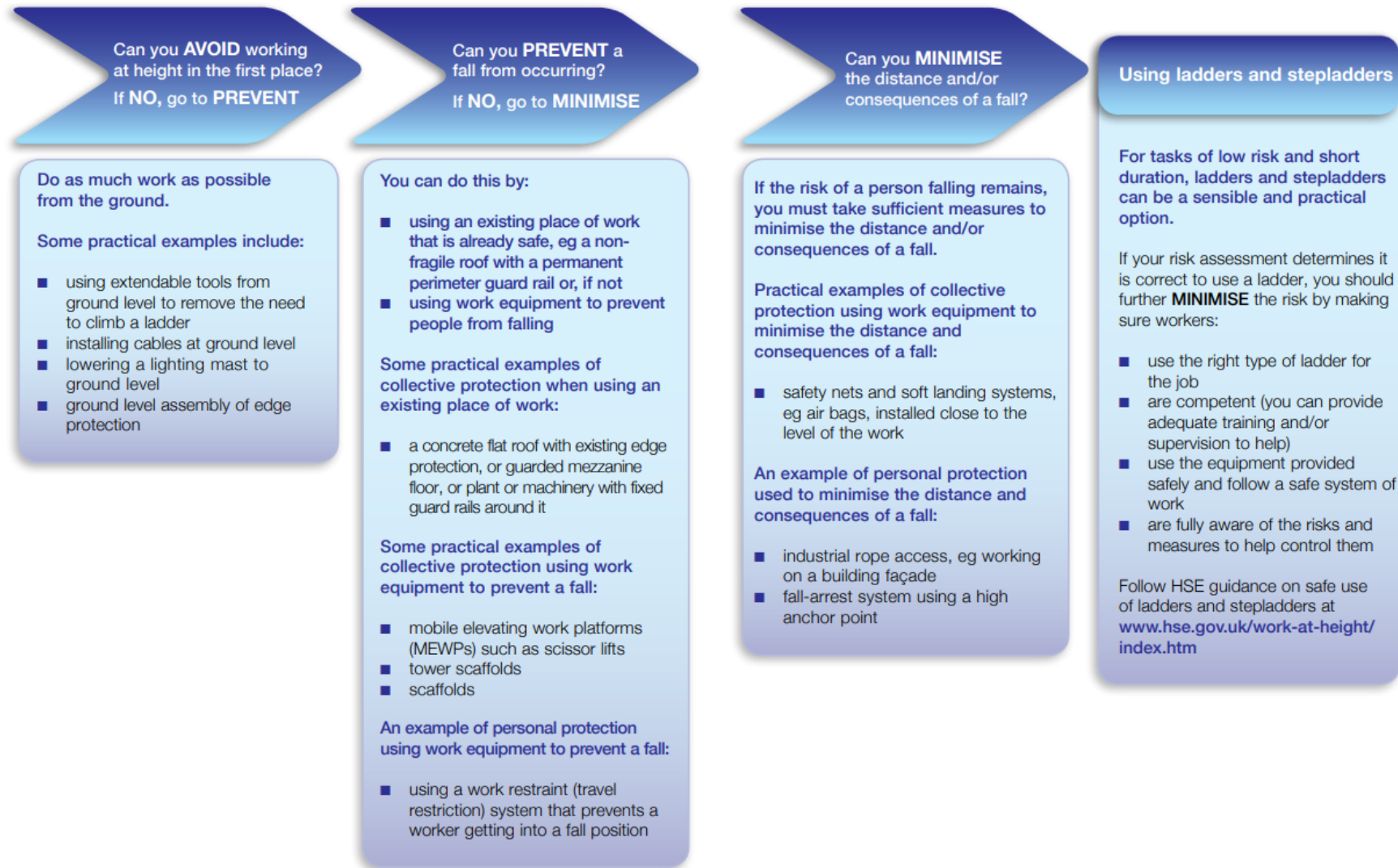
- **The Work at Height 2005 Regulations** - <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2005/735/contents/made>
- **HSE Working at Height, a Brief Guide** - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.pdf>

## Appendix 1: Working at Height Flowchart





## Appendix 2: HSE Work at Height Step by Step Diagram



For each step, consider what is reasonably practicable and use 'collective protection' before 'personal protection'