

1. Purpose

To describe the process of identification and controlling risks associated with working at heights at the Greater Dandenong City Council (GDCC).

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, and contractors at GDCC workplaces.

3. Definitions

Fall: an unintentional fall from height by a person from one level to another.

Fall Arrest System: a system used to safely stop a person falling an uncontrolled distance and reduce the impact of the fall. It is equipment or material, or a combination of equipment and material, that is designed to arrest the fall of a person. Example includes industrial safety nets, catch platforms and safety harness or inertia reel systems other than travel restraint systems. Used only, if it is not reasonably practicable to use higher level controls or if higher level controls might not be fully effective in preventing a fall on their own.

Fall Restraint System: controlling a person's movement by physically preventing the person from reaching a position at which there is a risk of a fall. It consists of a safety harness system such as a body harness that is connected by a lanyard to suitable anchorage point or static line.

Passive Fall Prevention: equipment and/or material, designed and installed to prevent a fall. After installation, does not require any ongoing adjustment, alteration or operation by any person to perform its function, for example roof guard railing.

Risk Assessment: the process of determining the likelihood and consequence of injury, disease or illness, or damage arising from exposure to a hazard. If there are existing Risk Controls already in place, an Assessment of Risk considers the reliability and robustness of these existing Risk Controls when determining the Inherent and Residual Risk Level/Score.

Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS): a document that identifies work that is high risk construction work, states the hazards and risks to health and safety of that work, describes the measures to control those risks, and describes the manner in which the risk control measures are to be implemented.

Temporary Work Platform: a temporary platform that provides a working area for the duration of work performed at height and that is designed to prevent a fall, for example scaffolding, elevated work platform etc.

Unprotected Edge: an edge where there is a horizontal gap, void or space of more than 300mm, which is not provided with a barrier to prevent a fall.

Working At Heights (WAH): any circumstances that expose a worker while at work, or other person while at or in the vicinity of a workplace, to a risk of a fall that is reasonably likely to cause injury to the worker or other person.

Permit to Work: a document that permits work to proceed under the conditions specified in the permit. For WAH, it's a permit system that ensure that only competent people who are trained in the use of appropriate control measures work in an area where there is a fall hazard. This includes tagging systems to all access points of a scaffold and travel restraint systems.

Work Positioning System: equipment, other than a temporary work platform, that enables a person to be positioned and safely supported at a work location for the duration of the task being undertaken at height, such as an industrial rope or travel restraint systems.

4. Responsibilities

For general OHS responsibilities refer to OHS Responsibilities Procedure.

Manager OHS is responsible for:

- ensuring the procedure is implemented and reviewed, as required

Managers are responsible for:

- implementing the procedure in their area of responsibility
- ensuring persons WAH are monitored

Contractors are responsible for:

- implementing appropriate WAH systems when tasks and processes are identified that may expose their employees to risks of falls from heights as described in section 5 below

5. Procedure

5.1 Identification of WAH risks

All hazardous WAH tasks must be identified, assessed and controlled before being undertaken. The person(s) undertaking the task must be consulted, and if practicable, the elected Health & Safety Representative (HSR) should also be involved.

Prior to any WAH activity being undertaken, a risk assessment should be conducted as per OHS Risk and Change Management Procedure and/or a SWMS developed including hazards and risks, suitable controls and fall emergency retrieval plan.

5.2 Control

If it is reasonably practicable, eliminate the risk by doing the work on the ground or from a solid construction. If this is not reasonably practicable, risk must be controlled using the following measures in order of priority:

- passive fall prevention
- work positioning system to ensure employees work within a safe area
- fall restraint system
- fall arrest system to limit the risk of injuries in the event of a fall

Where reasonably practicable a permit to work should be completed for any WAH, refer to OHS Permit to Work Procedure.

5.2.1 Restricted Access

Any work conducted at height where there is a risk to people from falling objects, will be as far as practicable, signed, barricaded and traffic management plan established.

5.3 Equipment

Managers shall ensure that all equipment used for WAH is fit for purpose conforming to Australian Standards and used according to the manufacturer's specifications.

A register of WAH Equipment will be maintained into the Plant & Equipment Register.

Any equipment identified that does not meet the required standard shall be tagged as per OHS Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) Procedure and either repaired or disposed of.

5.3.1 Ladders

Rung ladders should only be used as a means of access to or egress from a work area. A-frame platform ladders are to be used as a work platform if other work positioning systems are not reasonably practicable, at a minimum they must be:

- fit for purpose
- appropriate for duration of the task
- set up correctly

5.4 Training

All GDCC employees involved in working at heights will be provided with training and refresher training appropriate to their role and responsibility.

5.5 Reviewing Risks

Control measures should be reviewed at regular intervals to make sure that they have the desired effectiveness in reducing the likelihood and/or consequences of the risks associated with falls.

The Manager or their nominated representative are to review controls, to ensure effectiveness in reducing risks to an acceptable level.

6. References

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2017

Compliance Code: Prevention of Falls in General Construction 2019

AS 1891: Industrial Fall Arrest Systems and Devices Series

WorkSafe Vic. A guide to falls prevention June 2017

AS/NZS ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health & Safety Management Systems

7. Related Documents

GDCC Policy

GDCC Communication, Consultation and Issue Resolution Procedure

GDCC Permit to Work Procedure

GDCC Responsibilities Procedure

GDCC Risk and Change Management Procedure

GDCC Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) Procedure

8. Document History

Version Number	Issue Date	Description of Change
0.1		1 st Draft from MAV/JLT
0.2	22.05.2019	Accepted by OHS Policy Sub-Committee
0.3	24.06.2019	14 Day All Staff Consultation
1.0	July 2019	Approved by OHS Oversight Team

1.1	May 2024	2 nd Draft from OHS Team
1.2	May 2024	Accepted by OHS Policy Sub-Committee
1.3	July 2024	14 Day All Staff Consultation completed
1.4	April 2025	3 rd Draft from OHS Team
1.5	May 2025	Accepted by OHS Policy Sub-Committee
1.6	Jun 2025	14 Day All Staff Consultation
2.0	Jun 2025	Approved by OHS Committee