

# Working at Heights



Falls from heights are a major cause of fatalities and serious injuries throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Across Programmed, working at heights is regularly performed via various means and in multiple environments where consideration must be given to safely complete the task.

Some of the different types of work at heights completed across Programmed includes: work from ladders, work on roofs, work from scaffolds, work in elevated work platforms or work while suspended at height. Irrespective of the mode in which the work at heights is undertaken, this high-risk activity requires specific planning and management to ensure the fall risk is appropriately controlled.

Programmed have recognised this risk and applied minimum standards that are required to be implemented whenever any work at heights is undertaken.

All personnel involved in work at heights are to commit to implementing these minimum standards that not only protect those completing the work from injury, but also protect the safety of others .

## These minimum standards are below

### I will ensure

- ✓ That I consider all options to eliminate the need to perform work at height
- ✓ Fall barriers, restraints and arrest devices and/or anchor points are in place
- ✓ Height access equipment is operated and maintained according to manufacturer's instructions
- ✓ Rescue plans are understood and accessible
- ✓ Tools and equipment are secured
- ✓ Drop zones are identified and barricaded

## Planning the works

Planning is an essential component in the preparation to perform work at heights and requires active involvement from those who will undertake the task. This process is implemented to consider all the possible scenarios that could occur if the works are not managed effectively, with a view to addressing any concerns. When things don't go according to plan, it is likely that the planning component has been overlooked!

### Things to consider:

- What type of fall protection or equipment is required to minimise the risk to myself and others? Can a mobile scaffold be used as opposed to a step ladder?
- Are the personnel trained to undertake the task i.e. work safely at heights, EWP licence etc.?
- Has a safe work method been developed and does everyone understand the contents and the role they will play?
- Has a supervisor been appointed to oversee the work?
- Is there a permit process required and has this been completed?
- Will there be other workers/personnel onsite and in close proximity?
- Has a rescue plan been developed and is it understood by those completing the work?

## Controlling the risk

Once the job has been planned, the next step is to safely execute. It is important to note, that while there may be the best intentions to implement what has been planned, things don't always go as originally intended. Where this is the case, it is important to stop, reassess and determine a new approach to effectively manage the situation.

### Things to consider:

- What happens, when things change? i.e. site/ weather conditions, access issues, availability of staff, equipment etc.
- Is there a process in place to review the work method / risk assessment?
- Are the controls adequate to minimise the risk of injury?
- Are further resources required i.e. equipment, personnel?

By implementing the above processes along with adopting the minimum requirements expressed in the Safe Work Essentials for working at heights, we will reduce the likelihood of serious injury.