OHS Prevention of Falls Procedure

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Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to outline the [Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx) requirements in Department of Education and Training (the Department) workplaces for the prevention of falls. This procedure should be read in conjunction with the Victorian School Building Authority [Prevention of Falls Program](https://edugate.eduweb.vic.gov.au/sc/sites/Infonline/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/sc/sites/Infonline/Policies%20Guidelines%20and%20Procedures/PoF_Program_Factsheet.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1).

Scope:

This procedure applies to all Department workplaces including; schools, central and regional offices.

Procedure

Prevention of falls within this procedure applies to:

* work at a height of two metres or above (measured from the ground to foot position on ladder rung/work platform); and
* excavation work (depth of one and a half metres or more)

**No Department employee is permitted to undertake tasks that meet these criteria, unless their role specifically requires them to do so, and have undertaken the required training.**

## Identifying tasks where there is the potential to fall two metres or more

The [**Workplace Manager**](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx)and/or [**Management OHS Nominee**](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx), in consultation with [Health and Safety Representatives](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx) (HSR) and [employees](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx) are to identify all tasks where there is a potential to fall two metres or more. Examples include:

* collecting balls from roofs or gutters
* cleaning gutters
* air-conditioning maintenance
* hanging signs and displays
* changing lighting in a theatre or gymnasium
* ladder work
* working near holes, pits, trenches and shafts
* working on fragile, slippery or sloping surfaces.

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to record identified prevention of fall tasks in the ‘Hazard Type’ column of the *OHS Risk Register.*

## Identify hazards associated with the potential to fall two metres or more

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** in consultation with employees and HSR are to identify and record the [hazards](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx) associated with the tasks to be undertaken in the ‘Hazard Description’ column of the *OHS Risk Register*. Examples include:

* employee or contractor falling from height
* an object falling from height onto someone below
* fragile, sloping or slippery roofs
* unprotected roof edges e.g. no guard rail
* unstable or poorly maintained access equipment.

## Record prevention of fall controls

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** in consultation with employees and HSR are to identify, implement and record risk controls to manage prevention of falls in the *OHS Risk Register* using the Hierarchy of Controls. Examples include:

1. **Elimination** – design or modify the work environment, tools and/or tasks so work can be performed from the ground or solid construction
2. **Substitution** – install passive fall protection e.g. elevating work platform, scaffolding, or guard railing
3. **Engineering** – use of a work positioning system e.g. anchor points or travel restraint system or shoring, benching the sides of the excavation site
4. **Administration** – develop and provide training in Safe Work Procedure for employees and display ‘No Entry’ warning signs where contractors are working
5. **Personal Protective Equipment** – fall arrest system e.g. safety harness system.

**Note: ladders should only be used when all other risk controls have been considered.**

## Employees working where there is the potential to fall two metres or more

An employee who as part of their position description, is permitted to work at height (two metres or above) or near an excavation site is to complete a risk assessment using the [*Risk Assessment Template*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/taskbasedriskmgtform.docx) or equivalent template, see [*OHS Risk Management Procedure*](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/management/ohsriskmgtprocedure.docx)*.*

3.4.1 ‘Work Safely At Height Training’ For Department Employees

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to ensure that employees, who as part of their role are required to work at height, are trained in competency-based Work Safely at Heights Training Course (RIIWHS204D). Dependant on the frequency of the task, training may need to be completed again to ensure competency.

Attendance at other working at height training should be provided where practicable including:

* specific licensing and competency requirements e.g. scaffolding, fall arrest system, etc.
* the prevention of falls through safe systems of work
* the proper use, care and fitting of personal protective equipment
* the proper use, care and storage of tools and equipment to be used
* emergency response procedures including rescue at height
* safe methods of work related to working on brittle and fragile material.

The Workplace Manager and/or Management OHS Nominee are to record completed training in the OHS Training Planner / Register or equivalent template, see *OHS Induction and Training Procedure.*

## Contractors working where there is the potential to fall two metres or more

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to ensure that a contractor who as part of their role are required to work at height, are trained in competency-based Work Safely at Heights Training Course (RIIWHS204D).

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to ensure that a contractor also supplies a *Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)* or equivalent for any tasks where there is the potential to fall two metres or more, as mandated by the Department. The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** must review and sign the SWMS to verify it has been sighted and retain a copy. The SWMS at a minimum must include the following:

* prevention of contractor employee falls
* prevention of objects falling onto persons below
* access and egress to/from worksite
* isolation of worksite and signage
* installation and use of passive fall prevention device(s) or work positioning systems
* safe use of ladders, where required
* emergency response procedures and PPE

For further information see the *Contractor OHS Management Procedure*.

## Volunteers working where there is the potential to fall two metres or more

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to ensure that volunteers working where there is a potential to fall two metres or more, are trained in the competency-based Work Safely at Heights Training Course (RIIWHS204D).

The **Workplace Manager** and/or **Management OHS Nominee** are to ensure that volunteers also supply *Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)* or equivalent for any tasks where there is the potential to fall two metres or more, as mandated by the Department. Refer to section 3.5 of the *Contractor OHS Management Procedure*.

Defined terms

All terms defined by the Department are hyperlinked to the Department’s [Defined Health and Safety Terms](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/definedohsterms.aspx) webpage. Defined roles will appear **in bold**.

Related documentation:

*Contractor OHS Management Procedure*

*OHS Induction and Training Procedure*

*OHS Risk Management Procedure*

*OHS Risk Register*

*OHS Training Planner / Register*

*Risk Assessment Template*

*Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS)*

*Safe Work Procedure Template*

*Volunteer Worker OHS Management Procedure*

Related references:

*Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2017

WorkSafe Victoria-Prevention of Falls in General Construction Compliance Code; Edition 1: September 2008

AS1562.1:1992- Design and installation of sheet roof and wall cladding – Metal

AS1562.2:1999- Design and installation of sheet roof and wall cladding – Corrugated fibre-reinforced cement

AS1562.3:2006- Design and installation of sheet roof and wall cladding – Plastic

AS/NZS 1891.4:2009- Industrial fall-arrest systems and devices. Part 4: Selection, use and maintenance

AS/NZS 1892.5:2000-Portable Ladders, Part 5: Selection, safe use and care

AS/NZS 4488.2:1997 – Industrial rope systems. Part 2: Selection, use and maintenance

National Standard for Licensing Persons Performing High Risk Work, Australian Safety and Compensation Council

Certification, Licensing & Qualifications Checklist, WorkSafe Victoria

Further assistance

Further information, advice or assistance on any matters related to Prevention of Falls is available by contacting the OHS Advisory Service on ph. 1300 074 715 or email safety@edumail.vic.gov.au.