Bembridge Parish Council

WORKING AT HEIGHT POLICY

Adopted: 17th September 2025
Minute No: ……75/25.5……..
Review date: September 2026

WORKING AT HEIGHT POLICY

The Health and Safety Work at Height Regulations are relevant to all working at height activities carried out by the Bembridge Parish Council's Lengthsmen whilst at work.
Working at height means any work where, if precautions were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury. This includes 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.

Working at height does not include a slip or a trip on the level, nor does it include walking up and down a permanent staircase in a building.

It is the duty of all employees and others working on behalf of the Parish Council to comply with this policy, together with any other council instructions and guidance that may apply.
Further guidance can be found on the HSE website:
https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/step-by-step-guide.pdf

Core Principles

1. All working at height must be properly planned and organised, and a risk assessment must be carried out before the type of work is commenced.

2. Suitable control measures must be put in place to ensure the safety of those working at height. Ladders may be used for working at height tasks when a risk assessment has shown that using equipment offering a higher level of fall protection is not justified because of the low risk and short duration of use; or there are existing workplace features which cannot be altered.

3. Steps must be taken to ensure not only the safety of those working at height, but also to ensure the safety of those who might be impacted by the working at height, for example passers- by and those working beneath any working at height activity.

4. Individuals involved in working at height must be trained, competent and receive an appropriate level of supervision for the work. The level of competence and supervision required is dependent on the risk associated with the work.

5. Equipment used for working at height must be registered in an inventory and must be visually checked each time before use. Detailed inspections will take place quarterly and records of these inspections and any maintenance undertaken will be held in the Lengthsmen's Site Office and The Parish Council Office.

6. When not in use, all equipment must be kept secure so that it cannot be used by any un-authorised individuals. This includes ensuring that un-authorised access to elevated work platforms is not possible.

The Parish Clerk is responsible for the implementation of this policy, insofar as it relates to the activities and equipment associated with the Lengthsmen and for its communication to staff as appropriate.

All staff must comply with this policy and the associated arrangements, instructions and guidance on working at height.

The Clerk (or an external health and safety company) is responsible for ensuring that spot checks and audits are carried out to provide assurance that activities are being carried out in compliance with this policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed when any legal requirements change or at least once every three years.

Leaning ladders

When using a leaning ladder to carry out a task:

- Only carry light materials and tools – read the manufacturer's labels on the ladder and assess the risks
- Don't overreach – make sure your belt buckle (or navel) stays within the stiles
- Make sure the ladder is long enough or high enough for the task
- Don't overload the ladder – consider your weight and the equipment or materials you are carrying before working at height
- Check the pictogram or label on the ladder for any advisory information
- To help make sure the ladder angle is at the safest position to work from- you should use the 1-in-4 rule. This is where the ladder should be one space or unit of measurement out for every four spaces or units up (a 75° angle)
- Always grip the ladder and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending – don't slide down the stiles
- Don't try to move or extend the ladder while standing on the rungs
- Don't work off the top three rungs. Try to make sure that the ladder extends at least 1 metre or three rungs above where you are working
- Don't stand ladders on movable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, excavator buckets, vans or mobile elevating work platforms
- Avoid holding items when climbing (consider using a tool belt)
- Don't work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line, unless it has been made dead or it is protected with insulation. Use a non-conductive ladder (eg fibreglass or timber) for any electrical work
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing and wherever possible at the work position.
- Where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (eg to hold a nail while starting to knock it in, start a screw etc), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or mitigate the consequences if one happened
- Secure the ladder (eg by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point (ie do not rest it against weak upper surfaces such as glazing or plastic gutters)
- Consider using an effective stability device (a device which, if used correctly, prevents the ladder from slipping, some types of ladders come with these)

Telescopic ladders

Telescopic ladders are a variation of leaning ladders but remember that they don't all work in the same way.

They should always be used, stored and transported with care and kept clean. In addition to following this guidance, it's important you read and follow the user instructions provided by the manufacturer.

Before every use – in addition to the normal ladder checks – make sure they are operating correctly and that the mechanisms that lock each section are working properly.

Always follow the user instructions regarding the opening and closing procedure. Be aware of the potential for trapping fingers between the closing sections. Remember some of the important parts are inside where they cannot be seen. If you are in any doubt, do not use them.