

WORKING AT HEIGHTS POLICY

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Introduction

At Berwick Church of Christ, we recognise that there may be an increased risk to the health and safety of employees when working at heights. This policy has been established to identify risks and manage the risks accordingly.

Purpose

The Berwick Church of Christ has a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of employees. The Berwick Church of Christ also has obligations under the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, leaders and volunteers of Berwick Church of Christ carrying out work on the Church's premises. All contractors employed by the Church must provide written safe work practices (i.e. SWMS) when working at heights in line with this policy.

Definitions

“Board” means the governing body of Berwick Church of Christ comprised of the Elders.

“Contractors” means a person or firm that undertakes a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or do a job.

“Elder” means a member of the governing body of the Church, as appointed under rule 11.3 of the Constitution.

“Leaders” are those in some level of leadership in our church. This includes not only the Ministers, Pastors, Elders and Ministry Leaders but also those appointed to other leadership roles including those under 18 years.

“Staff” means all those employed by the Church.

“Volunteers” are all those who are involved in serving in any role other than in a leadership role, and includes those under the age of 18.

Policy

WORKING AT ANY HEIGHT

1. Working at height will be avoided wherever possible by the use of appropriate extended tools and equipment so that, as far as possible, work will be carried out from the ground.
2. Any proposed working at height shall be notified to the Operations Manager and approval to proceed obtained before work starts.
3. Where it is not possible to avoid working at height, appropriate tools and equipment will be provided by the Church. All Contractors are to provide their own tools and equipment.
4. Equipment for working at height will be suitable, stable and strong enough for the job.
5. Equipment for working at height will be maintained and checked regularly with appropriate certificates valid and available for inspection.
6. When working at height, staff, leaders, volunteers and contractors must:
 - Use suitable equipment
 - Not work at height alone.

- If working at height outside, take account of weather conditions
 - Avoid over-loading equipment
 - Avoid over-reaching
 - Avoid carrying excessive equipment, tools or materials
 - Ensure that tools and materials being used at height are stored safely and do not present a hazard to persons below.
 - Ensure that the ground below is, as far as practicable, free from people and obstacles/obstructions
 - Take special care if working near to fragile surfaces
 - Ensure that they have suitable protection from falling (or potentially falling) objects
 - Use suitable protective equipment and carry a mobile phone
 - Report to the Operations Manager any safety hazard identified in any work situation or with any equipment provided
7. Only staff and volunteers who are competent in the use of equipment for working at height (e.g. step-ladders, ladders and scaffolding etc.) may use such equipment.
8. Only competent and authorized persons are permitted to erect and check scaffolding.

WORKING ABOVE TWO METRES

If there is a risk of a person falling more than two metres (measured from the ground to foot position on ladder/rung/work platform), the Victorian Law requires a risk assessment to be undertaken. The risk assessment must consider:

- The type of task, and how long it will take.
- The physical surroundings and conditions in which the task will be undertaken.

All staff, leaders, volunteers or contractors are not permitted to undertake tasks that are above two metres, have access to an external roof area or work around roofs without the appropriate training and safety equipment (e.g. safety harness or scaffolding) and have obtained authorisation from the Operations Manager in line with this policy.

USING A LADDER

When deciding whether to use a ladder, always check whether there is a safer, viable alternative available (e.g. whether the work can be undertaken on the ground, whether a step platform can be used). If there is no viable alternative, a ladder can then be used. Ladders do not offer any protection from a fall. They should only be used for low risk and short duration tasks.

Ensure the ladder is set safely and securely. Whenever possible, the worker should:

- Inspect the ladder to ensure it does not pose a risk in itself. (Ladders with any faults should not be used and must be reported to the Safety Contact Person.)
- Face the ladder when going up and down or working from it.
- Stand on a rung at 900mm from the top.
- Stand below the second tread below the top plate.
- It is mandatory to have a second person present whenever using a ladder.
- Witches hats or a barrier may be used to ensure the ladder is not knocked by passing traffic, pedestrians or animals.

Some other factors to consider before beginning using the ladder could be:

- Will the job involve working near electricity? Is it safe to use a metal ladder?
- Are the surfaces the ladder will rest on unstable?
- Is there anything likely to prevent the ladder from being set up and secured properly?
- Does the person have to 'face away' from the ladder when going up and down, or working on it?
- Does the ladder show any evidence of faults?
- Is the ladder too short to allow the person to stand on a rung at 900mm from the top, or stand below the second tread below the top plate?
- Will the person be required to work on the ladder for more than a couple of hours, increasing the likelihood of fatigue?
- Will the job involve heavy work or the use of both hands to hold something?

If the answer to any of these questions, or questions like it, is "yes", then additional measures will need to be taken to ensure the work can be done safely.

USING A SCISSOR LIFT

From time to time the Church may choose to provide a scissor lift to complete tasks above 2 metres. Only those who have completed Scissor Lift Training and hold a valid EWP licence, and have been approved by the Operations Manager will be permitted to use the scissor lift.

It is mandatory that no one works alone when using a scissor lift, and it is also mandatory that both people have completed Scissor Lift Training and hold a valid EWP.

Safety Contact Person

Name:	Karen Fletcher
Phone number:	(03) 9702 1011
Email:	karenf@bcoc.com.au
Other contact details:	Church Office: 9702 1011 (Mondays to Thursdays)

Applicable Legislation, References and Other Policies

Item	Description
Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 Occupational Health & Safety Regulations 2017 (Part 3.3 Prevention of Falls) AS/NZS 1892.5: 2000 Portable Ladders – Selection, Safe Use and Care	Legislation, guidance and codes of practice in relation to working at heights.
BCOC – Risk Assessment Form	Risk assessment form to be completed for each activity/event/program.
BCOC – Policies	All policies and forms are located at www.berwickchurch.org.au/policies .