



Airedale Methodist Circuit Working at Height Policy

General statement of policy

Our policy is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that our activities are carried out safely and do not pose a risk to the health of our employees, volunteers, congregation, visitors and others who may use the church, graveyards or any other building we are responsible for. This will be in accordance with good practice and any relevant statutory provisions where they apply.

The Church Council/Circuit meeting accepts its overall responsibility for this. We will ensure that adequate resources are made available to achieve this objective. Any decisions we make will have due regard for it.

We will keep health and safety matters under review at appropriate intervals. We will monitor the effectiveness of the policy, amending it where we believe it is no longer valid.

It is the duty of each employee and volunteers to exercise personal responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This policy will be brought to their attention.

A copy of the policy will be kept in the church and made available to others on request.

Signed: _____ Chair of Circuit meeting

Name _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Adopted by _____ Church Council on _____

Signed: Chair of Church Council: _____

It is important that the following guidance is read and followed to ensure the church is complying with the Working at Height Policy agreed by the trustees of the Circuit/Church.

Link with guidance on the safe use of ladders

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>

Methodist Insurance Guide to Working at Height

<https://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/documents/working-at-height.pdf>

1. BACKGROUND

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 came into force on 6 April 2005 and apply in England, Wales and Scotland. They apply to employers, persons under their control and to the self-employed. The Church has a responsibility to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone from falling and ensure compliance with the Working at Height Regulations 2005.

VOLUNTEERS

The HSE make the following statement in their publication HSG 192 - *Charity and Voluntary Workers: a guide to health and safety at work*:

"While most Health and Safety law specifically refers to "employees" and the duties owed to them, it is good practice, and very strongly recommended, that people working as volunteers are given the same level of protection as employees".

Volunteer Induction Checklist Methodist Insurance

<https://www.methodistinsurance.co.uk/documents/volunteer-safety-checklist.pdf>

DEFINITION

The Regulations define work at height as work in any place, including a place at or below ground level or obtaining access to or egress from such place while at work, except by a staircase in a permanent workplace where, if measures required by the Regulations were not taken, a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury.

In effect that means that someone climbing on a chair or work surface is "working at height".

In the light of guidance from the Health and Safety Executive we would advise that all churches follow the regulations.

PLANNING AND SUPERVISION

Work at height must be properly planned and appropriately supervised and must not be carried out at height where it is reasonably practicable to carry out the work in a safer way. For example, light fittings, candelabra, sanctuary lamps and other items at high level could be taken down for cleaning, restoration and repair rather than being worked on in situ.

Where work is carried out at height, reasonable measures must be taken to prevent any person falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. Where access is routinely required at high level such as for the clearance of leaves and debris from gutters or the routine maintenance of parapets and roofs the installation of barriers or fall arrest systems may be necessary.

HOW WILL WE COMPLY?

The overriding principle of the regulations is that we must do all that is reasonably possible to prevent anyone falling.

There is a simple hierarchy for managing this:

DUTY HOLDERS MUST:-

- Avoid work at heights where they can;
- Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height; and
- Where they cannot eliminate the risk of a fall, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall should one occur.

We will comply by following the following simple rules:

- Avoid working at height (i.e climbing on things) wherever possible.
- Make sure that any working at height is properly planned, appropriately supervised and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable to prevent any persons falling a distance liable to cause injury.
- Working at heights should never be done by an individual working alone. There should always be a second person to steady a ladder or call for help if an accident should occur. If there are only two people working together then at least one should be at ground level.
- Exterior work should be postponed if the weather is likely to make it dangerous, and a ladder shouldn't be used in the rain.
- Work at heights should only be carried out by people with a level of training and experience that makes them competent to do it.
- If it has to be done it must be in a safe way with suitable equipment designed for the job and in such a way as to make a fall unlikely.
- The risk of objects falling on to people below must be controlled by keeping any area around the working area clear and cordoned off.
- Any equipment used must be checked for defects before use and used according to the manufacturer's instructions. All defects should be reported to the
.....as soon as practicably possible.
- Plans must be made for emergencies and rescue if necessary- e.g. making sure you know where first aid kits are kept and having access to a phone to call the emergency services.