# Sample risk assessment: setting up overhead displays

This risk assessment relates to setting up overhead displays in classrooms.

Will work require staff to be on, or work on roofs? [ ]  Yes [x]  No

**If yes: being on, or working on roofs is prohibited in all state schools. Use a contractor instead.**

Will work be undertaken over two metres above the ground? [ ]  Yes [x]  No

**If yes: complete a safe work method statement (SWMS) instead of this risk assessment**

Will work be undertaken 1.5 metres or more below a surface? [ ]  Yes [x]  No

**If yes: complete a safe work method statement (SWMS) instead of this risk assessment**

**For all other work at heights activities, continue using this risk assessment.**

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| **Person(s) undertaking the activity:** Willow Parsons, Sage Evans, Rob Plant, Russell Chambers |
| **Activity description:** Putting up displays, decorations, artwork at a height that is out of reach in classrooms, assembly hall and library display areas at single storey indoor level. |
| **Start Date:** 2/2/2018 | **Time:** 10.30am | **Finish Date:** ongoing | **Time:** ongoing |
| **Submitted by:** W. Parsons. | **Date:** 28/1/2014 |
| **Indicate the names of those who were involved in the preparation of this risk assessment:**Willow Parsons, Sage Evans, Rob Plant, Russell Chambers |
| **Training requirements:** Annual local WHS induction, Work at heights induction, local ladder maintenance procedures |
| **Supporting documentation is attached** (e.g. Work Area Access Permit (WAAP) or BEMIR approval for contractors, SOP, Chemical risk assessment, Safe work method statement). **Details:** Platform ladder SOP, Fall from heights pre-start checklist |

## Step 1: Identify the hazards associated with your task

Identifying the hazards associated with your task is a good starting point for your planning. Therisk of an injury occurring will vary according to the specific hazards associated with the different elements of your task. In order to identify foreseeable hazards and their associated risk, consider these questions and the factors in the following table:

* What is the distance of a potential fall?
* What is the severity of a possible injury?
* What task is to be done at height?
* How likely is it that a fall could occur?
* The environment, poor conditions and slippery surfaces (wind, rain, exposure)
* What is the expertise of those involved (competency, medical conditions etc.)?
* What is the duration of the activity?
* Where will the activity take place (set-up surfaces, proximity to doors, overhead electrical cables)?
* What equipment will be used (including erection and dismantling)?
* Are there any other hazards associated with the task? e.g. environmental, manual handling, etc)

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| **Surface** |
| [x]  Surface type | [x]  Stability/evenness  | [ ]  Slope |
| [ ]  Traction/grip/slipperiness | [x]  Load bearing/strength | [x]  Work area |
| [x]  Safe movement | [ ]  Fragile surfaces | [ ]  Access/egress |
| **Other/Detail:**  |
| **Hazard controls**: Platform ladder set up and used on solid, even floor surface only. Area to be clear of all other persons and objects. Ladder has safety grip bar and is industrially rated at 120kg capacity. |
| **Facilities/built environment** |
| [x]  Location | [x]  Proximity | [ ]  Driveways/pathways | [x]  Indoors |
| [x]  Buildings and fixtures | [ ]  Roofs/guttering | [ ]  Gardens/landscaping | [ ]  Retaining walls |
| **Other/detail:** |
| **Hazard controls:** Ladder may not be set up near doors unless they are locked. All ceiling fans to be off and stationary. Ensure the work zone is clear of obstructions (e.g. desks/chairs) in case of a fall.  |
| **Machinery/plant/equipment (refer to a completed SOP or safe work method statement)** |
| [ ]  Maintenance | [x]  Safe operation | [ ]  Machinery (fixed/ mobile/portable) | [x]  Ladders |
| [ ]  Suitability | [ ]  Hand tools | [ ]  Trestles/Scaffold | [ ]  Vehicles/trailers |
| **Other/detail:** |
| **Hazard controls:** Ladder inspection and pre-start checklists to be completed prior to work starting. Read both the Platform ladder SOP and Ladder safety SOP information before use and adhere to SOP operational safety checks during use. Appropriate footwear to be worn. Staff instructed not to use makeshift steps (chairs/ tables etc.). Use established reporting procedure for identified defective items with prompt removal/remedial action. |
| **Manual tasks** |
| [x]  Heights | [x]  Balance | [ ]  Restricted space | [ ]  Fatigue |
| [x]  Over reach | [ ]  Repetition | [ ]  Heavy objects | [ ]  Vibration |
| **Other/detail:** Two staff members required – one to stabilise ladder and pass materials, the other to complete task. |
| **Hazard controls:** Feet may not be more than two metres from ground. Reposition ladder when required, never over-reach. Maintain at least three points of contact when climbing and descending ladder to keep balance.  |
| **Environment** |
| [ ]  Sun exposure/glare | [ ]  Wind | [ ]  Water (rain/dew/frost/fog) |
| [ ]  Temperature (hot/cold) | [ ]  Electrical storm | [ ]  Work in isolation |
| **Other/detail:**  |
| **Hazard controls:** NA |
| **Energy systems** |
| [x]  Electricity (mains *and* solar) | [ ]  LPG gas |  [ ]  Gas/pressurised containers |
| **Other/detail:** |
| **Hazard controls:** Avoid contact with light fittings and other electrical hazards. Turn ceiling fans off. |
| **People**  |
| [x]  Falling objects | [x]  Competency/training | [ ]  Noise | [ ]  Contractors |
| [ ]  Injury | [ ]  Vehicle traffic | [x]  Pedestrian traffic | [ ]  Physically capable |
| **Other/detail:** |
| **Hazard controls:** Complete task outside core hours or when room is not timetabled to avoid risk of falling objects from unsecured display material striking others and to avoid the ladder being bumped. Staff must complete local workplace and heights induction training prior to work. |
| **Critical incident** |
| [ ]  Rescue from fall | [x]  Falling object | [ ]  Disruption to daily operations |
| **Other/detail:** Fall from ladder |
| **Hazard controls:** Displays prepared as far as possible before putting them up. Complete task outside core hours to avoid risk of falling objects from unsecured display material striking others. Activity approved before starting. Inform admin that activity is commencing in case of fall. Do not work in isolation. First aid available. |
| **Other hazards (e.g. chemical, biological)** |
| **Details:** **Hazard controls:** NA |

## Step 2: Assessing the inherent risk for fall from heights

Consider the nature of the activity against the indicators below to assess the inherent risk level. Risk levels may be considered medium, high or extreme – any activity where there is potential for fall from heights cannot be considered low risk). Once the risk level has been determined, follow the actions and approval required for that risk level.

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| **Overall inherent risk level and indicators** | **Action required/approval** |
| [x]  | Medium | If a fall were to occur, there would likely be minor injury requiring no more than first aid e.g.:* Working at a level where a fall would likely cause a minor injury.
* Doing a relatively easy tasks for a short period of time from a stable base and secure position
* A landing surface that is free from dangerous objects.
* Performing task from ground using long handled device
* Use of a ladder for a short duration for access purposes that is secured from moving and on stable ground.
 | Document controls recommended and/or complete a risk assessment. No formal approval required to undertake the activity.Use equipment designed for the task |

## Step 3: Suggested control measures for managing fall hazards

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| **Recommended control measures – consider options in the following order:** | **Detail how the controls will be implemented.** |
| **Level 5** Use a administrative control | Can measures be put in place to minimise the consequence of a fall through administrative controls?[ ]  Use a platform ladder or trestle[x]  Use a step platform ladder which provides a stable work surface that is appropriate for the area.[x]  Ladders must only be used if higher level controls are not reasonably practicable.[x]  Use ladders in accordance with the “Ladder safety safe operating procedure”.[ ]  Extension ladders, single ladders or step ladders are not recommended to perform work at height that is difficult or awkward, or for performing work at height for extended periods of time.[x]  Provide training and instruction to those working on ladders[ ]  Secure ladder[x]  In addition to higher level controls, create a ‘no go’ zone around the area or perform task out of core hours. | All controls listed in step 1 are to be implemented prior to work starting. The person climbing the ladder is responsible for ensuring implementation.Ladder inspection checklist is to be completed before work starts. The person climbing the ladder is responsible for ensuring implementation.The Fall from heights pre-start checklist (below) is to be used to ensure controls are in place. Both workers are responsible for completing the checklist.Use of ladder is restricted to those competent in its use.Floor surfaces suitable to use ladder (firm and even surface)Do not leave ladder unattended to avoid unauthorised use. |

## Step 4: Approval for activity

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| **Approval**  |
| Fall control selection: A Level 1 [ ] ; 2 [ ] ; 3 [ ] ; 4 [ ] ; or 5 [x]  control measure has been selected for this activity.**Reason why this control measure was selected (details):** The use level 1 and 2 controls is not practical due to the nature of the work (light duties), frequency and short duration of the tasks. Work is 0.8 m off above the floor. The use of an industrial rated platform ladder in accordance with a Safe Operating Procedure for Platform Ladders is the safest option given set up locations and the nature of work. |
| [ ]  | Approved as submitted (*Note: medium risk- no formal approval required*) |
| [ ]  | Any relevant documents attached are approved. Note: an SWMS is mandatory for work over 2 metres above the ground or 1.5 metres or more below a surface.[ ]  A safe work method statement is not required for this task[ ]  An approved safe work method statement has been submitted as part of this assessment. |
| [ ]  | Approved with the following condition(s):       |
| [ ]  | Not approved for the following reason(s):       |
| Approved by:  | Designation:  |
| Signed:  | Date:  |
| Once approved, details should be entered on MyHR WHS System. Reference No.  |

## Step 5: Implementing, monitoring and reviewing controls

Once you have completed your risk assessment:

* A record of the controls (e.g. risk assessment) is to be kept.
* Brief each team member on this risk assessment before work begins (this includes line managers, co-workers and or contractors).
* The controls identified in the risk assessment must be implemented and adhered to. Ensure each person knows that work is to stop immediately if there is a problem with any controls or they are found to be inadequate.
* Observe the work underway. If controls are not adequate, stop the work, review the risk assessment, adjust as required and re-brief the team before recommencing work.

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| **Monitor and review (complete during and/or after the activity)** | **Yes** | **No** |
| Are the control measures still effective?  | [x]  | [ ]  |
| Have there been any changes?  | [ ]  | [x]  |
| Are further actions required?  | [x]  | [ ]  |
| **Details:** This task is repeated frequently in the library display area, where overhead displays are changed weekly. The introduction of a pull-up display system would eliminate the need to use a ladder e.g. use a string and eyelet system so that displays can be lowered to ground level or the artwork could be hooked onto the string with a pole and hook. New system to be implemented as a high priority. An SOP on use of the pull up system is to be prepared in consultation with the library teacher aide (user) and the school Health and Safety Advisor by the WHS Committee. |
| **Reviewed by:** Sandra Bark (BSM) | **Review date:** 24/04/2014 |
| **Designation:** Business Services Manager (Principal’s delegate) | **Signature**:  |

## Fall from heights pre-start checklist

Complete this checklist before you start your activity. These are administrative processes that often form an important part of the overall safety of your activity. For any items checked ‘No’, provide further information on the additional or alternative controls to be implemented. Add further items that are relevant to your work.

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| **Before work commences**  | Yes | No | N/A |
| Person has received relevant information, instruction, training to competently perform the task  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Person is familiar with:* This risk assessment; and/or
* Safe work method statement; and/or
* Plant and equipment SOPs/manufacturer instructions
 | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  |
| Appropriate ground surface for equipment being used | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Plant and/or equipment is fully functional and meets relevant standards – pre-start and post activity logbook checks are completed where required.* All equipment is inspected, maintained and tested according to relevant standards
* All equipment and facilities comply with relevant safety standards
* Adequate space for the type of equipment being used
* Ensure that access to equipment is restricted
* Ensure that there is a sufficient quantity of equipment available to meet the needs of the workplace.
 | [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]  |
| Others in the workplace are aware the task is being undertaken. Do not work in isolation. | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Weather conditions are appropriate for the task or equipment being used immediately prior to commencement  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| First aid resources (including trained staff) suitable for activity are readily available | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Suitable clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment will be used | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Others will not be impacted by the equipment or task (falling items, noise, fumes etc.)The activity should be conducted to minimize the impact on others e.g. perform after hours when there is no human traffic or obstructions, barricade the area or made a ‘No Go’ zone;, e.g. performed after hours or during break time, area barricaded. | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Communication system: (e.g. how can persons working at height communicate during an emergency)  [ ]  mobile phone [ ]  telephone line at location [ ]  walkie talkies  [ ]  adult messenger  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| A method to monitor the activity is in place | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Appropriate signage has been posted. | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Further information:       |  |  |  |

## Further information

* [Platform Ladder SOP](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/platform-ladder.docx)
* [Ladders – Safe Operating Procedures](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiativesstrategies/Documents/ladder-operating-procedure.docx)
* Generic heights equipment SOP templates available from the ‘Working at Heights’ section of the [Creating healthier workplaces: Hazards and risks](https://education.qld.gov.au/initiatives-and-strategies/health-and-wellbeing/workplaces/safety/hazards) webpage. However, these should *always* be adapted to suit your specific task and work environment.