



Romford Baptist Church
Working at Height Policy

1. Policy Statement

The church recognises its responsibility to ensure that all reasonable precautions are taken to provide and maintain working conditions for its staff that are safe, healthy and compliant with all statutory requirements and codes of practice.

This includes staff and volunteers who are required as part of their duties to work at height, for instance, using a ladder. In this respect, the church fully complies with the Work at Height Regulations 2005, which aim to limit accidents and apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury.

The church understands that the above regulations place duties on employers to:

- avoid work at height where they can
- use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where they cannot avoid working at height
- 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.

2. Background

Every year there are serious accidents involving people working at height, many caused by falls from ladders, steps, windows or roofs, while others are struck by objects dropped or falling from above. Falls from even relatively low heights can result in serious injuries and it is estimated that such accidents may cause up to 4,000 major injuries a year in the UK, a substantial number of them fatal.

3. Procedures

This policy applies to all staff, contractors and volunteers. It specifically applies to staff such as maintenance staff who use ladders or stepladders or need to go onto roofs or balconies as part of their job.

In this church:

- all work at height should be properly planned, organised and supervised with a suitable risk assessment carried out prior to work by a responsible person
- work at height should be avoided wherever indicated by the risk assessment and wherever a suitable alternative course of action is available
- work at height should never be carried out alone and should always be supervised

- any work at height should be postponed where weather conditions endanger health or safety
- those involved in work at height should be properly equipped and trained and competent to do so.

In this church, ladder and stepladder hazards should be controlled by:

- the use of an effective protocol for working with a ladder/stepladder
- the training of persons using the ladder or stepladder
- the selection of a suitable type, size and design of ladder or stepladder for the job required — “the right tool for the right job”
- the provision of and use of suitable footwear by the user
- correctly positioning a ladder/stepladder for the job in hand and having the ladder or stepladder secured to a structure where appropriate for added stability
- displaying warning notices alerting people to work being carried out overhead and keeping them away from the base of a ladder or stepladder
- access being restricted in the vicinity where the ladder or stepladder is used
- never leaving a ladder or stepladder unattended.

Ladders should be positioned on a firm base at a 1:4 gradient against a wall and secured against a structure wherever possible. Great care must be taken in the placement as not all places will be suitable. If a suitable place cannot be found and the result would be a member of staff stretching from the ladder, then the job should be re-assessed and a contractor with more suitable equipment or expertise brought in. On no account should staff be allowed or encouraged to take safety risks.

4. Fragile Surfaces

Each individual place at which work is to be done at height should be risk-assessed on every occasion before that place is used, including fragile surfaces. Those conducting the assessment must ensure that no one goes onto or near a fragile surface at height unless that is the only reasonably practicable way for the worker to carry out the work safely, having regard to the demands of the task, equipment, or working environment. If work near a fragile surface is unavoidable, for instance, near a skylight, then suitable extra measures should be taken to ensure safety.

5. Maintenance of Ladders

In this church ladders and stepladders should be maintained and stored properly.

The maintenance and storage of ladders is the responsibility of the Operations Manager.

Staff responsible for the maintenance and storage of ladders should:

- implement a planned preventive maintenance schedule for all ladders and stepladders to ensure that they are kept in a safe and serviceable condition

- carry out regular inspections of equipment, with records kept in a log book
- ensure that when not in use all ladders and stepladders are locked away or secured to prevent unauthorised people taking and using them.

6. Contractors

The need to ensure safe working practices and the adequate use and maintenance of ladders extends to the conduct of contractors and the use of contractors' equipment. Spot checks of contractors working practices and own equipment will help to establish whether non-employees are working to safe standards while on the church's premises. Any concerns should be raised immediately with the management of the contractors involved.

7. Emergency Action

In the event of a fall from height, even from a comparatively low height, first aid support should be called immediately and an ambulance called where appropriate or the victim taken to hospital. In this church, work at height should never be conducted by a lone worker and should always be done in pairs so that someone is available to raise the alarm in the event of an emergency. Staff supervising such work should know what to do in the event of an accident and where to summon first-aid support.

8. Information, Instruction and Training

All staff should be made aware of the safety procedures for working at height including the use of ladders, stepladders and footstools and the wearing of appropriate clothing. This should include clear instructions for staff to avoid working from height whenever possible.

Staff who have a need to work from height or use a ladder/stepladder should receive specific training in:

- recognising common hazards associated with heights, ladders and stepladders
- how to carry out a basic visual inspection of ladders and stepladders before using the equipment
- the correct positioning and securing of a ladder or stepladder to maximise stability and prevent overreaching
- procedures for reporting problems to the management
- the need to warn others when ladders are in use
- arrangements for secure storage
- the correct manual handling procedures to reduce musculoskeletal disorder risks.

Other staff should be trained to use footstools effectively and safely and to help those using ladders and working from height by keeping people away from danger areas.

9. Review and Revision

Regular checks of accident and "near miss" incidents as well as annual auditing of the inspection, maintenance and use of ladders should be conducted by the Operations Manager to help to identify whether the procedures for working at height or the use of such equipment are sufficient.

Signed: Revd Ian Bunce (electronically)

Dated: 5 July 2021

Policy review date: December 2026

Version Control

1 – new policy.

2 – policy reviewed 30th December 2024 and is in line with the policy already signed off at Parkside Residential Home. No further changes required.