



St Hugh of Lincoln Church Health and Safety Policy Code of Practice for Working at Height

Extract from the Diocesan Parish Administration Manual

Section 13 – Health & Safety Policy : www.nwconsultancy.co.uk/dabnet.htm

“Effective health and safety management reduces the risks associated with our activities and helps to prevent accidents, injury and ill health. We shouldn’t look on it as preventing us from doing things so much as asking ourselves if what we are doing is safe and whether we could improve safety by doing things differently.

What we are aiming for in the Diocese, is to provide and maintain an environment which allows people to be involved in God’s work and celebrate their beliefs without being harmed.”

Each week in the UK, one person is killed in accidents involving ladders and another 40,000 a year require hospital treatment. The largest single cause of DIY deaths involves ladders.

For a number of tasks around the Parish buildings, it may be necessary to use a ladder for safe and convenient access. The statistics above show that whilst this is convenient, there are inherent, potentially fatal consequences. Because many of the jobs are undertaken by volunteers, it is essential for us to have some basic rules on the use of ladders to minimise the risk of accidents both to the ladder user and other personnel who are in the vicinity.

You have been given this Code of Practice to read because you have asked to have access to the church ladders or plan to work in/around the buildings with a ladder or scaffold. Once you have read this, and the accompanying HSE leaflet on the safe use of ladders and stepladders, you will be asked to sign an undertaking to work within the safety rules which we have established. The HSE guidance rules are supplemented with guidance taken from the Diocesan Health & Safety Policy which has been published to control and minimise exposure to risk.

Once you have signed the declaration, it will be kept on file and you will not be asked to sign again unless the Parish Priest withdraws your right to Work at Height because you have previously failed to comply with the undertakings given overleaf.

We are grateful to you for volunteering your time and expertise to assist the Parish. In asking you to follow this procedure, we are demonstrating our gratitude in a positive way by trying to ensure that you are equipped to work safely and the potential for accidents is minimised.

Fr Jeff

Parish Priest

Health & Safety Policy – Working at Height

1. Before commencing work, plan what you are going to do, the likely risks involved and the best approach to take to minimise the risks. Check the HSE guide to ensure that the ladder or platform to be used is suitable for the planned task. Assemble all the tools and materials you are likely to need and give thought to the best time to carry out the work to minimise other people's exposure to risk. Don't use improvised climbing platforms.
2. Only volunteer to work at height if you are comfortable with the task and are physically fit and well. Don't work at height if you are tired or have recently taken alcohol or are taking drugs which may cause drowsiness.
3. The Diocese has adopted the '2 metre' rule for Working at Height. This means that only trained, properly equipped and insured personnel may work on the Parish estate with their feet more than 2 metres from the ground. If you cannot achieve your objective with your feet less than 2 metres off the ground, the job will have to be undertaken by trained contractors. NOTE : This rule applies whether you are working from a ladder or from scaffolding.
4. The church owns a ladder which is suitable for the majority of the tasks which need to be undertaken around the church. The step at 1.9 metres is the highest point you may climb to. This is marked with green/yellow tape. Do NOT step on the higher rungs marked red.
5. Move the ladder when it is quiet to minimise the risk to others.
6. Check the ladder / climbing equipment to ensure that it is structurally sound and correctly assembled, i.e. with leg braces correctly locked for step ladders, wheels locked on scaffolds and structure correctly braced or, with extending ladders, correctly angled and secured to prevent it from slipping as you climb.
7. If the ladder / scaffold is faulty in any way, report the defective equipment to the owner. Postpone the job until the fault has been correctly rectified.
8. Do NOT work alone when working at height. Work with a 'buddy' to watch over you and prevent others from entering the area where you are working. As an additional security measure, ensure your 'buddy' has a mobile phone available to summon help if necessary.
9. Ensure that the ladder is steady as you start to climb. If it shows signs of unsteadiness, climb down and identify and remedy the problem before climbing the ladder again.
10. Ensure that your 'buddy' is clear of the danger zone for items falling from the ladder or your work area. If your buddy needs to enter the area where you are working, they must wear a hard hat. Consider 'fencing' off the danger zone to minimise the risk to third parties. Don't move a ladder which has loose objects on the platform / steps.
11. When working from an elevated position, do not over stretch. If you can't reach, stop and move the ladder. If it is too high for you to reach from the 1.9 metre step on the ladder, stop work and tell the PP who will ask a contractor to complete the task.
12. If you are working behind a door, ensure that the door is either locked or signed to indicate that you are working on a ladder behind the door.
13. Any accidents which occur when you are working MUST be recorded in the Accident Book. There is an accident book in each of the Parish properties.
14. Return the ladder to store after use and ensure that it is correctly secured.