Curtin University

Permit to Work Guide

Working at Heights

This guide is intended for Curtin University's Contractors, Vendors, University Staff, Students, and Permit Managers*. The information contained in the guide is to assist Permit Applicants in successfully obtaining a permit by understanding Curtin's minimum requirements.

Permit Applicants will have control over the way work is undertaken and will be operating under their own safety management system. This includes the responsibility to put in place appropriate control measures to eliminate risks so far as is reasonably practicable, or, if it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risks, to minimise health, safety, and operational risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

**A Permit Manager is a person trained and authorised by Curtin University to approve permits.*

properties.curtin.edu.au/working-with-us

1

BEFORE PERMIT APPLICATION

1.1 Permit information

Working at Heights Permit
Work that involves a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres from one level to another, into holes, openings or excavations and / or when workers require the use of individual fall arrest equipment

Examples:
Elevated height work on the external walls or roofs of a building such as roof plumbing, painting, facade refurbishment, inspection of roof anchor points or maintaining garden beds. Erecting and dismantling a scaffold. Using rope access system or elevated work platform (EWP) to clean windows, maintain electrical lighting, trees or landscaping.

Please note:
Permit to be submitted minimum **2 business days** prior to commencement of activity, a longer notice period is strongly encouraged.

1.2 Ensure:

- ☐ Contractor Company Status is COMPLIANT on Rapid Global (where applicable).
- ☐ Worker(s) have completed induction(s) for Curtin University (where applicable).
- ☐ Contractor Company and worker(s) hold required licenses and competencies to do the task (where applicable).

1.3 Plan & Consult

- ☐ Discuss works with Permit Manager to investigate potential impacts of working at height and identify relevant stahkeholders.
- ☐ Engage with relevant Curtin University stakeholders, building or impacted users to agree on work methodology.
- ☐ Identify all potential hazards associated with working at height and outline control measures.
- ☐ Use stakeholder feedback received to prepare required documents for permit application.
- ☐ Consider if other permits are required, i.e Vehicle Access, Roof Access or Isolation Permit.

LODGING PERMIT APPLICATION

2

2.1 Submit Application

https://properties.curtin.edu.au/working-with-us/permits/

- ☐ **Location Plan** of where works will be done.
- ☐ **Work Methodology.**
- ☐ **Risk Management Plan or Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS).**
- ☐ **Evidence of working at height trainings and qualifications, including any High Risk Work licences.**

Please note:
It is **mandatory** to have emergency procedures (including rescue procedures) when a fall arrest system is used.

2.2 Important

- Ensure anchorage points have been inspected within the previous 12 months prior to use (visual inspection).
- Ensure ground conditions are assessed for EWP operations prior to bringing it on-site.
- All EWP operators (including Scissor lifts) and any workers in the EWP **must** be licenced (class WP).
- Ensure safety harnesses are worn at all times on the EWP and workers using a harness as fall protection never work alone.
- Ensure there is a designated spotter for all works requiring the use of an EWP.
- Lower the EWP or any boom when travelling between work areas and beware of surrounding hazards.
- Ensure exclusion and drop zones (directly beneath and immediately adjacent to work areas) are maintained by fencing or barricades such as bollards or barrier mesh.

Please note:
Submission of permit does not constitute an approval. No works are to commence until approval notice email is received.

2.3 Issue Permit

- ☐ Permit Manager approves permit when they are satisfied applicant has met all relevant requirements.
- ☐ Work may begin based on the documentation submitted with the application and in accordance with the conditions outlined in the issued permit.

3

AFTER PERMIT APPROVAL

3.1 Conduct Works

The Permit Holder will have control over the manner in which work is undertaken and will be operating under their own safety management system to effectively manage the risks involved.

If any issues arise, stop works and escalate to Permit Manager (note: not SCC). Works may only proceed once the issue is resolved.

4

AFTER WORKS ARE COMPLETED

4.1 Close Permit

- ☐ Permit Holder to notify Permit Manager once all works pertaining to the permit are finished.
- ☐ Inspect the area to ensure no hazards remain as a result of the works.
- ☐ Where applicable, Permit Holder to send through relevant documentation to Permit Manager to close the permit.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is considered Working at Heights?

Any activity where there is a risk of falling from one level to another, into holes, openings or excavations that is reasonably likely to cause injury to the person or any other person. A risk assessment should be done and steps taken to eliminate or at least minimise the risk of the fall.

Working at height circumstances could include:
- in or on plant or a structure at an elevated level.
- in or on plant used to gain access to an elevated level.
- in the vicinity of an opening through which a person could fall.
- in the vicinity of an edge over which a person could fall.
- on or near a surface through which a person could fall.
- on or near a slippery, sloping or unstable surface.

Some of these working at height activities can be considered high risk construction work, when it involves a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres. A SWMS must be prepared for high risk construction work outlining the measures used to control risks and workers must be involved in the development of the SWMS.

---

2. When do I need a Working at Heights Permit?

A Working at Heights Permit is required when there is a risk of a person falling more than 2 metres from one level to another, into holes, openings or excavations and / or when workers require the use of individual fall arrest equipment.

---

3. Are there any exemptions for the Working at Heights Permit?

A permit may not be required for the following activities:

- Using an A-frame ladder up to 2 metres; **OR**
- Using a platform ladder up to 2 metres; **OR**
- Working from a fixed scaffold that conforms to AS/NZS 4576 Guidelines for scaffolding; **OR**
- Working from a mobile scaffold less than 2 metres that conforms to AS/NZS 4576 Guidelines for scaffolding; **OR**
- Working on a roof which has permanent fall prevention, i.e permanent guardrails or edge protection like parapet walls that are at least 900mm in height.

Persons conducting work must still undergo the Risk Management process and consult with stakeholders to complete a documented Risk Assessment or SWMS detailing the necessary controls required to eliminate or minimise the risks.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

4. What are some considerations when managing risk of falls?

Where possible, work must be done on the ground or a solid construction to eliminate the risk of falls.

Solid construction means an area:

- provided with barriers around its perimeter and around any openings from or through which a person could fall, i.e guardrails or handrails which are at least 900 mm in height.
- with a safe means of entry, exit and to move around the work area, i.e permanently installed platforms, ramps, stairs or fixed ladders.

Otherwise, adequate protection must be provided to minimise the risk of a fall through providing:

- A **fall prevention** device, i.e a secure fence, edge protection, working platforms, and covers.
- A **work positioning** system, if a fall prevention device is not reasonably practicable.
- A suitable **fall arrest** system, where neither of these are reasonably practicable.

---

5. Definitions

Fall prevention devices

A 'fall prevention device' is material or equipment – or a combination of both – designed to prevent a fall for temporary work at heights, that once in place after initial installation does not require any ongoing adjustment, halteration or operation by any person to ensure its integrity**.**

Examples: temporary work platforms, perimeter guardrails, safety mesh.

Work positioning systems

A 'work positioning system' includes any plant or structure, other than a temporary work platform, that enables a person to be positioned and safely supported at a location in such a way that a fall is prevented for the duration of the relevant work being carried out.

Examples: Restraint technique, industrial rope access systems.

Fall arrest systems

Fall arrest systems are intended to safely stop a worker falling an uncontrolled distance and reduce the impact of the fall.

Examples: catch platforms, safety nets and individual fall arrest systems (including anchorage lines or rails), double lanyards.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

6. What are the training and competency required for Working at height?

High Risk Work Licences may be required depending on the scope of works:

CLASS	SCAFFOLDING, EWP
SB	Basic Scaffolding
SI	Intermediate Scaffolding
SA	Advanced Scaffolding
WP	Boom type elevating work platforms with boom length 11m or greater

Trainings will include national unit of competency for:

- Working safely at heights.
- Elevating Work Platform under 11m.
- Elevating Work Platform over 11m.
- Rope Access technician training and be assessed by the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA).

Please note:

- Scaffolding must be erected, altered and dismantled by competent people.
- Scaffolds from which a person or object could fall more than 4 metres must be erected, altered and dismantled by a person who holds a scaffolding high risk work licence.
- When working at Curtin University, all EWP operators, including Scissor lifts and any workers in the EWP must hold a high risk work licence (class WP).

7. What are some considerations involved with working at height activities?

Planning

- Eliminating the need to work at height and working on the ground is the most effective way of protecting workers from the risk of falls.
- Examples include: installing air-con units at ground level, lowering of light fixtures for maintainance and repairs, fitting outlets, inlets and controls of large tanks, plant equipment near the ground.
- Assess weather conditions (maximum wind speed, rain, light, potential storms) for suitability of working at height operations to be carried out.
- If using EWP, investigate if the ground is able to provide adequate support – I.e, type of ground, location of excavations, embankments or underground services, non-weight bearing structures (pits, manholes), elevated / suspended floors, presence of water, continued operation of the EWP in one location.
- Consider proximity to other plant, structures, public areas and ensure all overhead obstructions are identified and controlled – risk of injury from workers in the working platform being trapped, crushed or otherwise injured is minimised.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Operations

- Ensure all hazards have been identified and control measures documented in the risk assessment / SWMS.
- Hazards to consider may include unprotected edges, fragile surfaces, skylights, holes or vents, trip hazards and overbalancing or losing grip on pitched or sloping roofs.
- Ensure all the necessary information and instruction is given to all persons involved.
- Confirm workplace factors are suitable for the task i.e ground load bearing capacity, slope of the ground, wet or windy conditions.
- Ensure a fall injury prevention system is provided and in operation whenever there is a risk that a person could fall from an open edge at the workplace.
- Verify competency and licensing of worker(s).
- A worker should not use a fall arrest system unless there is at least one other person on the site who can rescue them if they fall.
- Ensure relevant warning signages are implemented.
- Ensure provision of safe means of access to and exit from the workplace or any area within the workplace from or through which a person could fall.
- Traffic management – safe distance from pedestrians, other mobile plant or vehicle traffic.

8. What are some of the common risks associated with using an EWP?

EWP operation can present a risk of injury to people from:

- Structural failure – failure of EWP component if it has been overloaded or damaged.
- Overturning – if the EWP has been overloaded, placed on unstable / soft ground, on excessive slopes, failure to use or fully extend outriggers or stabilisers.
- Contact or collision with other plant and structures, i.e buildings, overhead beams, powerlines or other mobile equipment.
- Falls from heights – when working from an elevated platform.
- Falling objects – when tools and equipment are not being secured while the platform is elevated.

Some things to consider:

- EWP type, registration, inspections and maintenance.
- Ensure the weight of the EWP does not exceed ground bearing capacity, i.e check load ratings of sumps, pits, pipes or decking. Ground conditions should be stable when using the machine, movement of earth could cause the machine to destabilise.
- If EWP is unloaded from a truck, ensure measures are in place to prevent people from being hit or crushed.
- Ensure a reliable method of communication has been established between the operator(s) of the EWP and those on the ground, such as spotter(s) and people with emergency support roles.
- Ensure spotter is a competent person, located in a safe position, able to clearly observe the separation distances, not undertaking any other work whilst performing spotting duties and able to communicate with the EWP operator at all times, so that the EWP can be stopped to prevent entering exclusion zones.
- Ensure timbers or pads are placed under the outriggers of the EWP to help distribute the load over a bigger area and they are set up properly.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- Ensure appropriate exclusion zones have been established around the EWP to minimise the risk of workers or other people being hit by falling objects when the EWP is in an elevated position.
- Ensure all workers in the EWP are wearing a fall arrest harness and have been trained in the use of them.
- Ensure all workers are standing on the floor of the EWP and any materials kept within the guardrails.
- Never enter or leave the platform when it is elevated. Remain within the confines of the work platform at all times.
- The risk of destabilising and overturning the machine as well as risks of collisions with other plant, structures or people is increased when moving an EWP, i.e EWP or any boom should be lowered before moving.
- Before leaving the EWP unattended, ensure it has been secured to prevent unauthorised use by positioning the EWP in a designated area, disabling all powered motions and removing keys.

9. When are emergency procedures required?

Whenever there are risks from working at height, emergency procedures must be established and first aid equipment provided.

When developing emergency procedures the different types of emergency and rescue scenarios that might arise should be considered based on the information from the risk assessment.

Typical injuries from falls can include:

- Unconsciousness,
- Blocked airway,
- Impalement,
- Serious head or abdominal injuries and fractures.

A person using a fall arrest system could also suffer suspension intolerance as a result of being suspended in a harness after a fall.

The emergency procedures must be tested to ensure that they are effective. Workers must be provided with suitable and adequate information, instruction and training in relation to the emergency procedures.

Workers must have access to first aid equipment and facilities for the administration of first aid. There must also be workers who are trained to administer first aid or have access to people who are trained in first aid.

10. What is suspension intolerance?

Suspension intolerance can occur with a fall arrest system when a person has an arrested fall and is suspended in an upright, vertical position. The capacity of the lower legs to store large amounts of blood reduces the return of blood to the heart, slowing the heart rate, which can cause the person to faint. This may lead to renal failure and eventually death, depending on a person's susceptibility. This condition may be worsened by heat and dehydration.

The quick rescue of a person suspended in a harness, as soon as possible, is vital. For this reason, workers should be capable of conducting a rescue of a fallen worker and be familiar with on-site rescue equipment and procedures.

It is important to ensure workers using a harness as fall protection never work alone.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

11. What is a Rescue Procedure?

If a fall arrest system is provided as a measure to control risk, emergency and rescue procedures must be established and the procedures must be tested to ensure they are effective.

Considerations	Questions
Location of the work area	Is the work at height being carried out in a remote or isolated place? How accessible is it in an emergency and how far away is it from medical facilities? Can the rescue of a person after an arrested fall be provided immediately, without relying on emergency services?
Communications	How can workers working at height communicate in an emergency?
Rescue equipment	What kinds of emergencies may arise? The provision of suitable rescue equipment will depend on the nature of the work and the control measures used. Selected rescue equipment should be kept in close proximity to the work area so that it can be used immediately.
Capabilities of rescuers	Are rescuers properly trained, sufficiently fit to carry out their task and capable of using equipment provided for rescue? Have emergency procedures been tested to demonstrate that they are effective?
First Aid	Is first aid available for injuries associated with falls? Are trained first aid officers available to make proper use of necessary first aid equipment?
Emergency services - if they are relied on for rescue	How will the local emergency services, like ambulance, be notified of an incident? What is the likely response time?