

Working at height

You must make sure work is properly planned, and supervised by a qualified technical member of staff or inducted competent person. You must only use the University's equipment that you have been inducted on; this will only be the Tallescope, A-frame ladders and step ladders.

First, assess the risks. Factors to weigh up include the height of the task, the duration and frequency, and the condition of the surface being worked on. Then follow these simple steps:

- Avoid work at height where it's reasonably practicable;
- Where work at height cannot easily be avoided, prevent falls by following induction procedures and by using the correct type of equipment;
- Minimise the distance and consequences of a possible fall.

Do.....

- As much work as possible from the ground;
- Ensure workers can get safely to and from where they will be working at height;
- Ensure only equipment you have been inducted on is used and it is suitable, stable and strong enough for the job. Although the equipment is maintained and checked regularly always inspect it yourself before use;
- Provide/wear protection from falling objects (protective helmet).

Don't....

- Ever use leaning ladders;
- Overload ladders – consider the equipment or materials workers are carrying before working at height. Check the pictogram or label on the ladder for information;
- Overreach on stepladders;
- Ever use ladders lent against walls or any other surface (only step ladders can be used);
- Use stepladders for strenuous or heavy tasks; only use them for light work of a short duration (a maximum of 30 minutes at a time);
- Let anyone who is not competent (who doesn't have the skills, knowledge and experience or hasn't been inducted to do the job) work at height.

Step Ladder/A frame ladders – procedures for use

1. You can only use a ladder once you have been inducted on how to use it safely.
2. Always inspect the ladders before use. Check the following:
 - a. Locking bars: do not use the ladder if the locking bars are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged;
 - b. Feet: do not use the ladder if the feet are missing, worn or damaged;
 - c. Platform (step ladder): do not use the ladder if the platform is split or buckled;
 - d. Steps & Treads: do not use the ladder if the steps/treads are contaminated as they could be slippery. Also check the step fixings;
 - e. Stiles (handle at the top of a step ladder): do not use if the stiles are bent or damaged;

- f. Locking mechanism: do not use if they are bent or the fixings are worn. Ensure any locking bars are engaged.
3. Check the area where you are going to be using the ladder is level and stable and that all four feet are on the ground.
4. Always have a second person supporting the bottom of the ladder at all times.
5. Only carry light materials and tools.
6. Don't over-reach.
7. Don't stand and work on the top three steps (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold.
8. Ensure any locking devices are engaged.
9. Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not sideways on. However, there are occasions when a risk assessment may show it is safer to work sideways on, e.g. in a retail stock room when you can't engage the stepladder locks to work face forwards because of space restraints in narrow aisles, but you can fully lock it to work sideways on.
10. Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g. bricks or concrete).
11. Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, e.g. by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment.
12. Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder.

Tallescope

Procedures for use.

1. A logbook for the Tallescope is kept in the Theatre & Dance Technical Hub.
2. When not in use the Tallescope is to be locked so it cannot be used without approval.
3. At least one technical member of staff working on the job shall have been fully trained and carry proof of training. The following University representatives are trained:
 - a. Simon Coulson
 - b. Richard Lawrence
 - c. Kiran Tanna
 - d. Jonny Woolsey
4. The Tallescope is inspected annually by an inspector approved by the manufacturer then approved and certificated if in good order.
5. A visual inspection is to be made before each use of the Tallescope. If there is any fault the Tallescope is to be taken out of service immediately, labelled as **NOT TO BE USED**, and the defect noted in the log book.
6. The Tallescope is to be erected as directed by one of the trained representatives.
7. If the Tallescope is to be moved with a person in the cage then:
 - a. The Tallescope should only be used on a horizontal (flat and level) stage;
 - b. There should be a supervisor who is not moving the Tallescope or in the cage;
 - c. There should be no obstructions along the route of the movement at stage level or overhead;

- d. The outriggers should be locked off just above the floor (not more than 10mm above the floor);
- e. The Tallescope should only be moved along its long axis;
- f. Movement shall be by pushing or pulling the uprights of the base frames (trunions) and not the diagonals;
- g. The Tallescope should only be moved slowly and smoothly (not more than 0.5m per second/1mph);
- h. The Tallescope should be moved by at least two people: the person pushing the Tallescope should confirm there are no hazards at stage level and the person pulling the Tallescope should confirm there are no overhead hazards;
- i. The person in the cage shall hold on with both hands while the Tallescope is moving;
- j. The person in the cage should instruct the person moving the Tallescope and have the instructions acknowledged before movement occurs;
- k. The castor brakes should be applied before any work other than light work begins (light work is such as focusing luminaires: any work involving exertion or lateral pressure is not light work);
- l. The details of each job and the personnel must be recorded in the log book and signed off by the trained representative present.

Safety Rules.

- Make sure the Tallescope is safe and in position by ensuring castors and adjustable legs are correctly locked and set up as advised by the trained representative before climbing.
- Check overhead clearance before tilting the Tallescope to vertical position.
- Do not use near live cables.
- Only use within the theatre specialist spaces.
- Always extend stabilisers to the maximum position and ensure the interlock clip is in the stabilisers extension.
- The maximum platform load is 115kg (one person).
- Before tilting the Tallescope back to the horizontal position retract to the upper section of the ladder and ensure all equipment is removed from the platform.
- Never use a Tallescope which is damaged or incorrectly assembled. Don't force parts that don't fit freely.