



# Method Statement

## Working at Height, Handling Hazardous Materials and Manual Lifting

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# Working at Height, Handling Hazardous Chemicals & Manual Lifting

## Issue History

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# Working at Height, Handling Hazardous Chemicals & Manual Lifting

## 1. Purpose and Scope

This method statement sets out the instructions that must be followed when using leaning ladders and step ladders, handling small quantities of proprietary hazardous materials and manually lifting weights. The instructions are based on HSE guidance.

The method statement also provides general guidance on keeping the Mill a safe place to visit and in which to work.

## 2. Abbreviations Used

1 In this method statement the following abbreviations are used and have the meanings assigned to them:

DfT	Director Responsible for Training or a competent and approved person acting on his/ her behalf.
DRS	Director Responsible for Safety or a competent and approved person acting on his/ her behalf.
HSE	The Health and Safety Executive
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment

## 3. Safety

1 Accident statistics show that falls from ladders are the most common source of death and serious injury in the work place.

◇ Following HSE practice the term ladders in this method statement embraces both leaning ladders and step ladders.

2 All members must be aware that the HSE remains concerned at the number of deaths and serious injuries that are attributable to the misuse of ladders

⇒ Please help the Society to minimise the risk that we might become of interest to the HSE.

➤ **It could be you who is saved from serious injury.**

3 Similarly slips, trips and falls, and manual lifting can be the cause of many avoidable accidents.

## 4. PPE

1 Various items of protective equipment are identified in the method statement.

a PPE is provided for your protection: Members are strongly urged to wear it.

b Members supervising others must ensure that Members under training, contractors, other volunteers and visitors wear the required PPE. Persons declining to do so must not be allowed to undertake the operation.

## 5. Working at Height

### 5.1. Regular Checks

1 All ladders must be formally inspected at regular intervals not exceeding six months.

a The inspections must be carried out by two persons approved by the Society's Board

◇ In the event that the ladder being inspected has been repaired, in order to make it fit for purpose, the persons making the inspection must not include the person or persons making the repair.

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- b All ladders owned by the Society must be given a unique number and entered into a register. The initial entry into the register should record:
  - ◇ the ladder's unique number
  - ◇ a description of the ladder
  - ◇ its date of acquisition (if known)
- c After each inspection an entry should be made showing:
  - ◇ the date of the inspection
  - ◇ any repairs made to the ladder
  - ◇ any additional comments (if appropriate)
  - ◇ the date on which it was scrapped (when appropriate)
- d A ladder that passes its regular check should be marked with a green label showing the latest date on which the ladder may be used.
  - ◇ The date must not be more than six months after the date on which the ladder was inspected.
- e A ladder that fails its regular inspection must be clearly labelled as unfit for use and put in a safe place beyond use until it can either be repaired or safely disposed of.
  - ◇ To mark the ladder as unfit for use remove the green label and expose the underlying red prohibition notice<sup>†</sup>.
  - ◇ Under no circumstances may any such a ladder be used.
- f After any necessary repairs have been completed and before the ladder is put back into use, it must be inspected in accordance with the instructions in paragraph 1a immediately above.
  - ◇ Any ladder that fails an inspection, following an attempted repair, must be condemned as unfit for further use<sup>†</sup>.
- g A ladder that cannot be repaired must be retained in a place of safety and clearly marked as unfit for use.
  - ◇ Such a ladder must be disposed of safely as soon as practicable<sup>†</sup>
  - ◇ No person must be allowed to remove the ladder from the Mill other than for the purposes of disposal.

## 5.2. Pre Use checks

- 1 HSE Guidance suggests that prior to use the intending user of a ladder should carry out a visual inspection to make sure it is safe to use and that it is within its approved operating period.
  - a Determine that the ladder is within its approved operating period
    - ◇ The latest date at which a ladder can be used is recorded on the green label
    - ◇ A ladder that carries a red tag is by definition unfit for use.
  - b If the ladder is outside its approved operating period, remove the green tag and put it to one side
    - ◇ The ladder **must not** be used until the requisite Routine Check has been carried out (see Section 5.1)

\* Any green labels removed should be placed in the Foreman's Office it may be possible to reuse them.  
† Members should be aware that the HSE's expectation is that ladders that fail a Regular Check will be condemned and scrapped. The implication is that the requirement is to demonstrate that a repaired ladder is fit for purpose: unless this can be done the ladder should be scrapped.

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- c Ensure that the ladder is suitable for the intended task
  - d Visual inspections should be carried out as follows:
    - ◇ before using the ladder for a work task
    - ◇ after something has changed: for example
      - ⇒ The ladder has been dropped
      - ⇒ The ladder has been moved from a dirty to a clean area
        - The condition of the feet should be checked they may be coated in slippery material.
  - e There is no requirement to record the successful outcome of a visual inspection
    - ◇ The benefit of conducting pre-use checks is that they provide the opportunity to pick up any immediate/serious defects before they cause an accident.
- 2 A ladder that is found to be defective and whose fault cannot be simply and immediately rectified\* must put to one side and have its green label removed, thus exposing the red do not use label.
- ◇ Such a ladder must be scrapped unless it can be repaired and formally approved for further use under the arrangements set out in Section 5.1.

## 5.3. Using Ladders

- 1 Persons using ladders must be aware of and adhere to the Guidance published by the HSE under the title 'Safe use of ladders and stepladders: a brief guide.' The document (reference INDG455) was first published in January 2014
- ◇ The guidance can be downloaded free from the HSE's website, go to reference [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf) and download a free copy
  - ◇ A printed copy is available in the Foreman's Office
    - ⇒ In the event that the document is superseded by a later version or is replaced with a new document then this requirement shall be deemed to apply to the new version/ document.
- 2 Competency in the use of ladders:
- a All members using ladders as of the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014 shall be deemed to be approved users for the purposes of this requirement.
    - ◇ Any existing members wishing further training should contact the DfT.
  - b Any persons new to the Society and wishing to use ladders must be supervised until such time as the Chief Engineer or a relevant Head of Technical Area is satisfied that the person is competent to use ladders safely.
    - ◇ The DfT will arrange any necessary instruction.

## 6. Handling Hazardous Materials

### 6.1. Sources of Hazardous Materials

- 1 Hazardous materials arising at the Mill have two major sources
- a Proprietary chemicals bought in for specific purposes
  - b Materials arising as side effects from activities carried out at the Mill

\* These simple faults include items such as cleaning mud from the ladder's feet. They do not include repairs to the ladder's structure.

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## **6.2. Handling bought in Chemicals**

- 1 The DRS must maintain a Register of Chemicals approved for purchase.
  - a Only approved chemicals may be purchased
  - b Persons wishing to purchase non-approved chemicals must consult the DRS
- 2 The detailed instructions set out in this Section cover the purchase, storage and use of approved hazardous chemicals.
  - a Confirm that the chemical required is on the approved list
  - b Determine the minimum quantity of chemical required to complete the work
    - ◇ It is not good practice to acquire unnecessarily large quantities of chemicals
      - ⇒ Larger than necessary quantities increase the risks associated with storage
  - c Confirm that there are adequate arrangements for the storage of the chemical once it has been purchased.
  - d Only purchase chemicals from reputable suppliers
    - ◇ Reputable suppliers normally supply a COSHH assessment and instructions on the appropriate usage of the chemical and may be willing to dispose of unwanted material
    - ◇ Before placing an order with a supplier who cannot supply a COSHH assessment and instructions on appropriate usage consult with the Chairman or DRS
  - e On receipt of the chemical place it in its designated storage location
    - ◇ Do not leave it lying around: such behaviour can be dangerous.
  - f When handling the chemical, wear any PPE identified in the COSHH assessment or required by the supplier's instructions
  - g Dispose of any unwanted chemical using a licenced waste contractor
    - ◇ It is the Society's responsibility to ensure that waste is disposed of in a responsible way.
      - ⇒ Always try to recycle the surplus chemical before seeking to dispose of it as waste.

## **6.3. Materials Arising as the Result of Other Activities**

- 1 The HSE suggests that hazardous waste may arise from the following sources:
  - ◇ dusts from mechanical cutting, shaping and abrasive blasting
  - ◇ gases and fumes from welding, soldering, and cutting
  - ◇ development of germs as a result of incorrect fluid maintenance or usage.
  - ◇ lubricants, adhesives, paints, degreasing and stripping fluids
- 2 When the possibility of hazardous waste being generated arises, the operator concerned must carry out a risk assessment and where necessary come up with appropriate control measures. Such measures may include:
  - a dust, fume or vapour extraction
  - b use of respirators or other PPE
  - c appropriate fluid maintenance
  - d skin checks
  - e wearing of latex gloves
- 3 The HSE requires persons intending to carry out operations of the above kind to carry out a risk assessment:

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- a In many cases such assessments have already been carried out.
  - ◇ In these cases it is sufficient to know that the assessments exist and to abide by any associated conditions.
- b Members, proposing to handle unusual materials, are encouraged to consult with the DRS at an early stage.

## 7. Lifting and Manual Handling

### 7.1. Manual Handling and Lifting

- 1 HSE Guidance includes the following suggestions:
  - a Avoid hazardous manual handling operations so far as is reasonably practicable
    - ◇ The HSE suggests the redesigning of the task to avoid moving the load or by automating or mechanising the process
      - ⇒ Whilst these suggestions are unlikely to be applicable to the Mill as a Heritage museum: the principle remains valid.
  - b Make a suitable and sufficient assessment of any hazardous manual handling operations that cannot be avoided
    - ◇ **This is a mandatory requirement**
      - ⇒ In the interests of the person making this assessment the results should be documented.
  - c Reduce the risk of injury from those operations so far as is reasonably practicable.
    - ◇ Where possible, you should provide mechanical assistance, for example a sack trolley or hoist.
  - d Where this is not reasonably practicable, look at ways of changing the task, the load and working environment
- 2 Do not attempt to lift heavy loads single handed
  - ◇ Bearing in mind the physical profile of the Mill's membership, the Board has concluded that no member, volunteer or person working under the direct supervision of a member, working at the Mill, should attempt to lift a load in excess of 20kgs (just under ½ cwt).
    - ⇒ If the load exceeds 20kg seek assistance or mechanical aids
  - ◇ Contractors shall be required to set their own limits but in no case may a single handed lift exceed 25kg.
- 3 Always use the correct lifting technique:
  - a Starting position
    - ◇ Back straight
    - ◇ Knees bent
  - b Effecting the lift
    - ◇ Lift by straightening the legs keeping the back straight at all times
    - ◇ **Never try to lift a weight by straightening an initially curved back**
- 4 Concerns:
  - a If you feel uncomfortable lifting any weight, seek assistance
    - ◇ It is never macho to overload you back
  - b If you have never received training in manual lifting techniques or if you feel the need for further training

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- ◇ Contact the DfT who will arrange for you to receive suitable training
- c If you need to carry something awkward on stairs
  - ◇ Ask for assistance
- 5 Consider the need to use suitable PPE. For example:
  - ◇ Appropriate gloves may reduce accidental slippage of the load during the lift
  - ◇ Totector shoes will reduce damage to the foot in the event of a dropped load.

### 8. Slips, Trips and Falls on Flat Ground

- 1 Ensure that walk ways are kept clear at all times. Common examples
  - a Removing or excluding potential trip hazards
    - ◇ Never leave tools or pieces of work lying on the floor for any longer than necessary
    - ◇ Do not allow cables to snake across the floor
      - ⇒ If this is unavoidable protect the cable using the special shielding held in the store.
  - b Spilt liquid on the floor
    - ◇ Mop up as soon as possible.
      - ⇒ If necessary warn others in the vicinity.
    - ◇ If the liquid is a hydrocarbon
      - ⇒ extinguish all naked flames in the area
      - ⇒ mop up quickly
      - ⇒ cover with sand or soil.