# Standard Procedures for Working at Heights

When workers or contractors are cleaning gutters, external windows, skylights or roofs, or painting the outside of a building they are often operating at heights where a fall could cause serious injury or death. High winds, rain and equipment failure may also increase the risk.

Assess the risk in your workplaces. To manage it, apply the hierarchy of controls.

A) ELIMINATION

If workers or contractors can avoid working at heights, they should do so.

B) SUBSTITUTION

Wherever possible use extensions on cleaning equipment to reach high areas.

C) SEPARATION

Not a viable option

D) REDESIGN

Consider using specialised equipment such as:

- scaffolding;
- suspended scaffolding;
- elevating work platforms;
- ladders;
- implement and document safe work practices in set-up, operating, and safe use of plant. For example:
- get on or off at a safe place;
- follow manufacturer's instructions;
- know the emergency procedures, e.g. how to lower suspended scaffolding in the event of a power failure;
- ensure that fixed anchoring points are capable of supporting the load.

**OTHER CONTROLS**

These controls should only be adopted where it is not possible to adopt the control measures at A), B), C) and D) above. Administrative controls and personal protective equipment are less effective and require more frequent reviews of hazards, systems of work, equipment and training. The condition of the roof and surrounds will require inspection prior to commencement to ensure it is safe and structurally sufficient. That intermediate supports for static lines do not exceed 6.0-metre spacings unless specifically designed to do so.

E) ADMINISTRATION

Make sure equipment conforms to Australian Standards. Look for the AS compliance plate. Ensure only trained and certified people operate equipment. Have equipment checked and maintained regularly.

F) PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Consider all other control options first.

Provide safety devices (harness or belt) and train workers in their proper use ensure anchoring points are installed by an Engineer or other qualified person and ensure anchoring points are tested at least on once every 12 months by an Engineer who has the experience and competence to assess the integrity of a building or structure and anchorage point AS/NZS 1891.4-2000.

Working from roofs is a complex issue; the above should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice: Safe Work on Roofs.