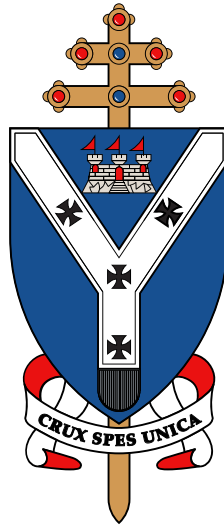


Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh



Health & Safety Clergy/Staff Guidance Handbook

worknest
H&S

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook contains the Health & Safety information you require to comply with our Health & Safety Policy, all clergy and employees are required to read this guidance document. If you have any queries regarding the contents, please do not hesitate to ask.

The Archdiocese of St Andrews & Edinburgh (the Archdiocese) takes its responsibility for Health & Safety very seriously and is committed to a programme of progressive improvement that requires input from all its clergy and employees. If you see anything during your work that gives rise to a concern you are positively encouraged to report it to your Parish Priest or Line Manager.

Safety is everyone's responsibility and that includes you.

Health & Safety Consultants

Our Health & Safety Consultants at WorkNest will be responsible for review of this guidance. They can also be contacted to provide basic Health & Safety advice on 0345 2268393 or via the Director of Property.

Notice Board

Where there is a notice board within the Church, Presbytery and/or Church Hall, the following documents must be displayed:

- Health & Safety Policy Statement
- Public Liability Insurance Certificate
- Health & Safety Law Poster

The Archdiocese has established effective lines of communication so as to involve and consult with clergy and employees.

These may include:

- Individual conversations
- Notice boards
- Internal publications
- Meetings
- Health & Safety meetings.



Asbestos

Asbestos fibres are present in the environment in the UK, so people are exposed to very low levels of fibres. However, a key factor in the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease is the total number of fibres breathed in.

Working on or near damaged asbestos-containing materials or breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres, which may be many hundreds of times that of environmental levels could increase your chances of getting an asbestos-related disease.

When these fibres are inhaled, they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4000 deaths a year. There are three main diseases caused by asbestos: mesothelioma (which is always fatal), lung cancer (almost always fatal) and asbestosis (not always fatal, but it can be very debilitating).

Remember, these diseases will not affect you immediately but may do so later in life, so there is a need for you to protect yourself now to prevent you contracting an asbestos-related disease in the future.

It is also important to remember that people who smoke and are also exposed to asbestos fibres are at a much greater risk of developing lung cancer.

You are mostly at risk when:

- You are working on an unfamiliar site.
- The building you are working on was built before the year 2000.
- Asbestos-containing materials were not identified before the job was started.
- Asbestos-containing materials were identified but this information was not passed on by the people in charge to the people doing the work.
- You don't know how to recognise and work safely with asbestos.
- You know how to work safely with asbestos, but you choose to put yourself at risk by not following proper precautions, perhaps to save time or because no one else is following proper procedures.

Remember, if the asbestos is not damaged or located somewhere where it cannot be easily damaged it won't be a risk to you.

- You can't see or smell asbestos fibres in the air.
- The effects of asbestos take many years to show up - avoid breathing it in now.
- Smoking increases the risk many times.
- Asbestos is only a danger when fibres are made airborne.

What to do if you suspect Asbestos

- DO NOT disturb the material.
- Check the design specification (detailed asbestos procedure).
- Notify the responsible person on the site.
- Ask to see the site asbestos log / survey report.
- DO NOT carry out any drilling or removal of the suspect material until it has been declared safe by an approved specialist or the material has been safely removed by a licensed contractor.

How do I identify Asbestos?

There is no clear way of identifying asbestos by just looking at it, but the following images do clarify the main areas you are likely to find it and what it looks like.



Asbestos textured coating



Asbestos-containing ceiling tiles



Asbestos cement drainage pipe (downpipe)



Pieces of Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB)



Suspended Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB) tiles
in a corridor



Asbestos cement downpipe, hopper
and profile sheet



Asbestos rope used as insulation on a pipe



Pieces of Asbestos Insulating Board (AIB)



Asbestos panelling around a gas meter



Asbestos-containing floor tiles in a corridor

This list is not exhaustive and is a basic example of products which you may come into contact with.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

There are a range of hazardous substances to which the regulations apply. These include:










- Those classified and shown with a warning label
- Substances with Occupational Exposure Limits
- Biological agents e.g. Legionella bacteria
- Any kind of dust
- Substances generated by work processes e.g. various bacteria/viruses from bodily fluids', premises with covered or underground parking that may expose people to vehicle exhaust fumes, and some manufacturing and cleaning processes that may give off dusts, vapours or fumes.

Hazard Labelling

Hazardous substances may be defined as being toxic, corrosive, a health hazard, a serious health hazard, flammable, oxidising, explosive, harmful to the environment or gases stored under pressure.

Classification of hazardous substances is currently done under the Classification Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations, which came into full effect in June 2015. These Regulations require hazardous substances to be packaged and labelled to an internationally agreed standard.

Hazardous substances can be readily identified by their label:

	Health Hazard		Corrosive		Toxic
	Flammable		Oxidising		Harmful to the environment
	Serious Health Hazard		Explosive		Gases under pressure

Hazardous substances that are generated by work processes are not as easily identifiable as they do not come conveniently labelled. You will be informed of any hazardous substances generated by the Archdiocese work processes.

Exposure Routes

Exposure to hazardous substances may be via:

- Inhalation e.g. dust/particulate or vapours/fumes
- Contact with eyes or cuts
- Absorption through the skin
- Ingestion
- Injection

Hazard Effects

Effects on health may be short-term or long-term and will generally vary according to levels and duration of exposure. Effects of substances also vary with some having an accumulative effect and some that will have only temporary health effects.

Control Principles

The principles applied to substances to control exposure are:

1. Elimination e.g. don't use the substance
2. Substitution e.g. a less hazardous substance
3. Engineering controls e.g. Local Exhaust Ventilation
4. Information, instruction, supervision and training
5. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) e.g. gloves, glasses, overalls.

Working with Hazardous Substances

Prior to working:

- Ensure you understand the risks of working with any hazardous substances and the controls in place
- Ensure you know the location of the material safety data sheets and risk assessments
- Ensure the controls specified in the risk assessment, including any items for emergencies are:
 - In place
 - Fully operational
 - Available
- Ensure you understand how to operate or use any control measures safely and have received training prior to starting work

Whilst working:

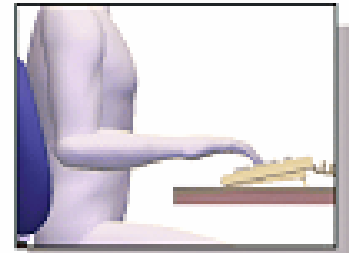
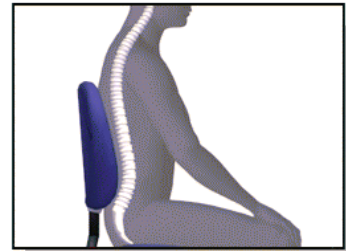
- Ensure regular check controls are effective
- Clean up any spillages etc
- Report any problems or defects immediately to your Parish Priest or Line Manager
- Report any ill-health or accidents to your Parish Priest or Line Manager.

Display Screen Equipment (DSE)/Visual Display Unit (VDU)

Some practical tips:

Getting Comfortable

- Adjust your chair and VDU to find the most comfortable position for your work. As a broad guide, your lumbar should be supported by the seat cushion, forearms should be approximately horizontal and your eyes the same height as the top of the VDU.
- Make sure you have enough workspace to take whatever documents or other equipment you need.
- Try different arrangements of keyboard, screen, mouse and documents to find the best arrangement for you. A document holder may help you avoid awkward neck and eye movements.
- Arrange your desk and VDU to avoid glare, or bright reflections on the screen. This will be easiest if neither you nor the screen is directly facing windows or bright lights. Adjust curtains or blinds to prevent unwanted light.
- Make sure there is space under your desk to move your legs freely. Move any obstacles such as boxes or equipment.
- Avoid excess pressure from the edge of your seat on the backs of your legs and knees. A footrest may be helpful, particularly for smaller users.



Keying in

- Adjust your keyboard to get a good keying position. A space in front of the keyboard is sometimes helpful for resting the hands and wrists when not keying.
- Try to keep your wrists straight when keying. Keep a soft touch on the keys and don't overstretch your fingers. Good keyboard technique is important.

Using a mouse

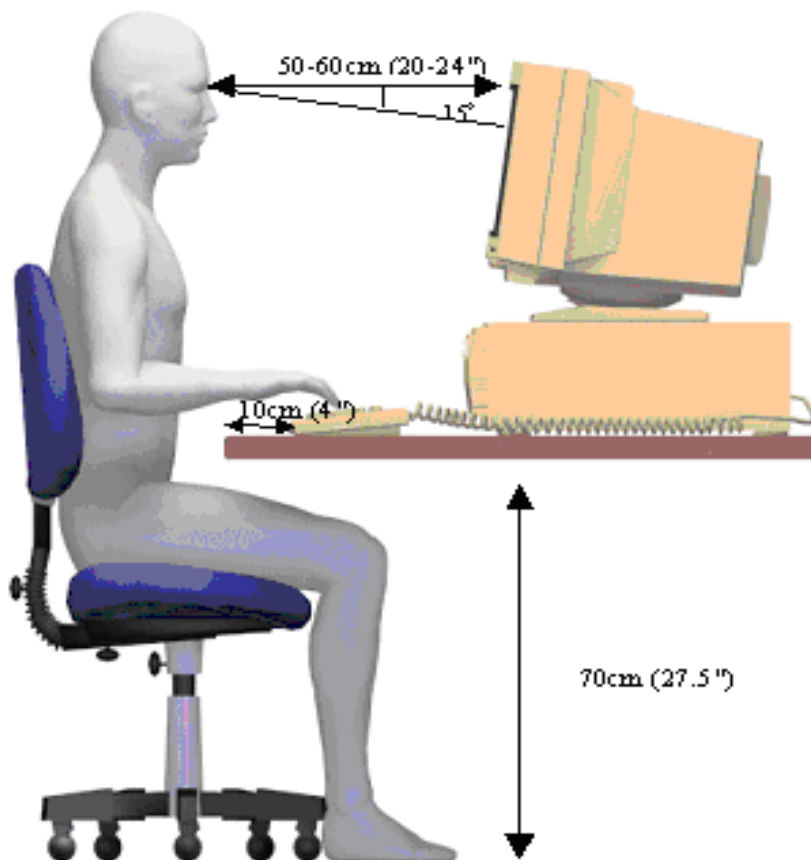
- Position the mouse within easy reach, so it can be used with the wrist straight. Sit upright and close to the desk, so you don't have to work with your mouse arm stretched. Move the keyboard out of the way if it is not being used.
- Support your forearm on the desk, and don't grip the mouse too tightly.
- Rest your fingers lightly on the buttons and do not press them hard.

Reading the screen

- Adjust the brightness and contrast controls on the screen to suit lighting conditions in the room.
- Make sure the screen surface is clean.
- In setting up software, choose options giving text that is large enough to read easily on your screen when you are sitting in a normal, comfortable working position. Select colours that are easy on the eye (avoid red text on a blue background, or vice-versa).
- Individual characters on the screen should be sharply focused and should not flicker or move. If they do, the VDU may need servicing or adjustment.

Posture and Breaks

- Don't sit in the same position for long periods. Make sure you change your posture as often as practicable. Some movement is desirable, but avoid repeated stretching to reach things you need (if this happens a lot, rearrange your workstation).
- Most jobs provide opportunities to take a break from the screen, e.g. to do filing or photocopying. Make use of them. If there are no such natural breaks in your job, your employer should plan for you to have rest breaks. Frequent short breaks are better than fewer long ones.



Electrical Safety

What are the hazards?

The main hazards are:

- Contact with live parts causing shock/burns (normal mains voltage, 230 volts AC, can kill)
- Faults which could cause fires
- Fire or explosion where electricity could be the source of ignition in a potentially flammable or explosive atmosphere, e.g. in a spray paint booth.

Ensure that:

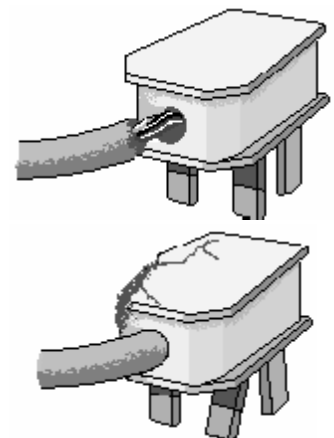
- Suspect or faulty equipment is taken out of use, labelled 'DO NOT USE' and kept secure until examined by a competent person
- Where possible, equipment, tools and power socket-outlets are switched off before plugging in or unplugging
- Equipment is switched off and/or unplugged before cleaning or making adjustments.

Visual checks on electrical equipment

1. Inspections and testing of all portable electrical equipment and the fixed electrical installations is the responsibility of the Archdiocese (Parish Priest or Curia Management for Gillis), though the responsibility for undertaking visual checks falls to all clergy and employees.

2. Around 95% of all faults or damage can be found by visual checks and this will involve checking:

- for damage to the cable covering, such as cuts and abrasions (apart from light scuffing); or non-standard repairs e.g. cable wrapped with electrical tape
- where the cable enters the plug. Internal wires - those covered by the outer sheath may be exposed or the cable may be loose and move within the plug
- for damage to the plug, such as the cracked casing, bent pins, evidence of overheating i.e. burn marks or discolouration
- for damage to the sockets, switches, etc. e.g. cracked or broken casing
- that equipment has been used in conditions for which it is not suitable, e.g. a wet or dusty workplace or has damage to the outer cover of the equipment or has obvious loose parts or screws
- cables are routed safely, with one extension lead used per socket. Where there is a risk of tripping over cables and they cannot be re-routed, cable strips must be fitted.



Ladders and Stepladders

This guidance is to help you:

- Know when to use a ladder
- Decide how to go about selecting the right sort of ladder for the particular job
- Understand how to use it
- Know how to look after it
- Take sensible safety precautions.

When is a ladder the most suitable access equipment?

As a guide, **only** use a ladder or stepladder:

- In one position for a maximum of 30 minutes
- For 'light work' - they are not suitable for strenuous or heavy work. If a task involves you carrying more than 10 kg (a bucket of something) up the ladder or steps it will need to be justified by a detailed manual handling assessment
- Where a handhold is available on the ladder or stepladder
- Where you can maintain three points of contact (hands and feet) at the working position.

On a **ladder** where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period of time, other measures will be needed to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences of one. On **stepladders** where a handhold is not practicable you will need to consider whether it is safe to work or not.

Is it a safe place to use a ladder or stepladder?

As a guide, **only** use a ladder or stepladder:

- On firm ground or spread the load (e.g. use a board)
- On level ground - for stepladders refer to the manufacturer's instructions, for ladders the maximum safe ground slopes on a suitable surface (unless the manufacturer states otherwise) are as follows:
 - side slope 16° – but the rungs still need to be levelled
 - back slope 6°
- On clean, solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc). These need to be clean (no oil, moss or leaf litter) and free of loose material (sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination.

Never stand ladders or stepladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, vans, stacks of paper or boxes etc. If the ladder or stepladder won't reach, you need to use a more suitable type of access equipment.

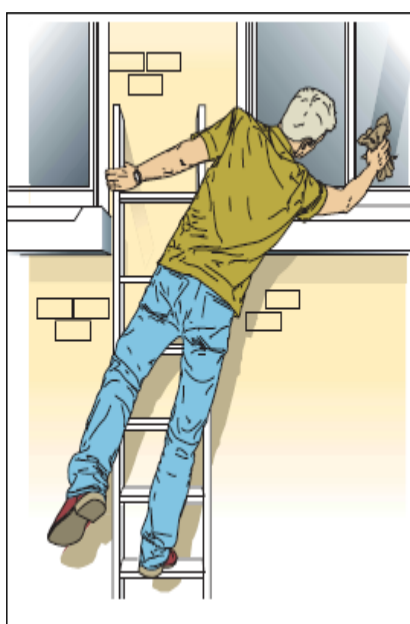
You should **only** use ladders or stepladders:

- Where they will not be struck by vehicles, by protecting them with suitable barriers or cones
- Where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows, by securing doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible. If this is impractical, have a person standing guard at a doorway, or inform building occupants not to open windows until they are told it is safe to do so.
- Where pedestrians are prevented from walking under them or near them, by using barriers, cones or, as a last resort, a person standing guard at the base.

Safety in use – ladders

On a ladder **do not**:

- Overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the ladder
- Overreach - keep your navel inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung throughout the task
- Rest ladders against weak upper surfaces e.g. glazing or plastic gutters. Use effective spreader bars instead
- Use the top three rungs
- Move the ladder while someone is using it
- Extend a ladder while standing on the rungs
- Slide down the stiles.



Overreaching – not maintaining
3 points of contact

Maintaining 3 points of contact

Do:

- Make sure the ladder rungs are level. This can be judged by the naked eye. Ladders can be levelled using specially designed devices but not by using bits of brick or whatever else is at hand
- Check that the weather is suitable - do not use ladders in strong or gusting winds
- Wear sensible footwear. Shoes should not have the soles hanging off, have long or dangling laces, or be thick with mud or other slippery contaminants. High heels are also unsuitable!

- Check that you are fit. Certain medical conditions or medication, or a fear of heights, could mean that you shouldn't be working at height
- Know how to tie a ladder properly.

You should also avoid holding items when climbing (e.g. by using tool belts). If you must carry something you must still have one free hand to grip the ladder. Remember the **THREE POINTS OF CONTACT RULE** – 2 hands and 1 foot or 2 feet and 1 hand **MUST BE** on the ladder at all times when climbing and descending.

Ladders must be erected at an angle of 75°. To judge the angle, use the angle indicator marked on the stiles of some ladders or the 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up).

Ladders used for access to another level must be tied and should extend at least 1 metre above the landing point to provide a secure handhold.

Correct 1 in 4 angle:

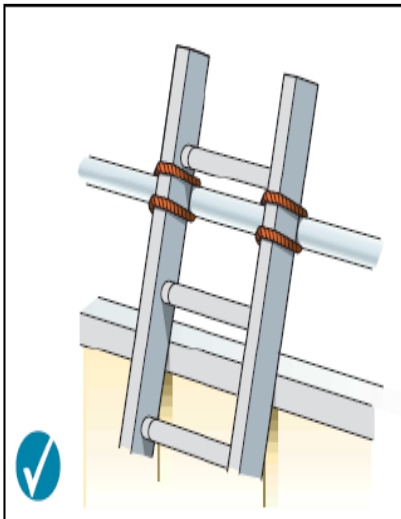


Securing a ladder

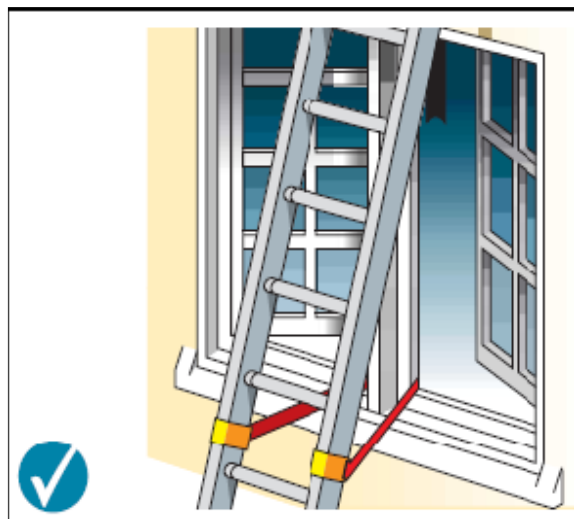
To prevent the ladder slipping away from the wall, or slipping sideways, you must secure it. The options for securing a **ladder** are:

- Tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied
- Where this is not practical, use a safe, unsecured ladder or a ladder supplemented with an effective ladder stability device
- If this is not possible, then securely wedge the ladder e.g. against a wall
- If none of the above can be achieved, foot the ladder. Footing is the last resort and other methods of securing the ladder should be used in preference.

If you do have to foot a ladder, be aware that this will not stop a ladder slipping sideways at the top. Individuals footing ladders should apply weight downwards on the ladder by standing on a rung, or by pushing against the ladder stiles (although this is less effective).



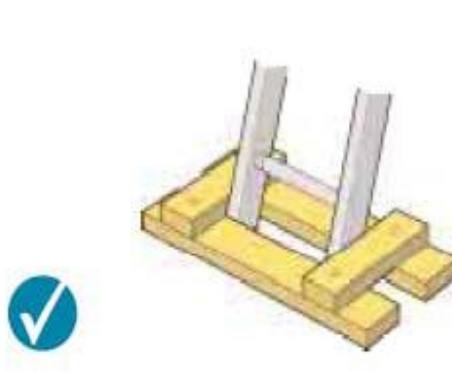
Ladder tied at the top stiles
(correct for working on, but not for access)



Tying part way down



Tying near the base



Securing at the base

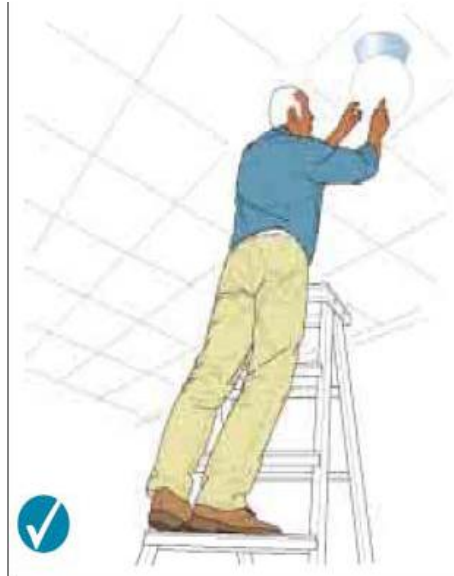
Safety in use – stepladders

On a stepladder **do not**:

- Overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the stepladder
- Use it in locations where the restraint devices cannot be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged
- Use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder
- Use the top three steps of swing-back or double-sided stepladders, where a step forms the very top of the stepladder.



Correct – 2 clear rungs. Don't work any higher on this type of stepladder



Correct – 3 clear rungs, do not work any higher on this type of stepladder

When using stepladders, avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g. bricks or concrete), by having the steps facing the work activity. Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided you should prevent the steps from tipping over, for example by tying the steps to a suitable point, or you should use a more suitable type of access equipment.



Incorrect – steps side on to work activity



Correct – steps facing work activity

Where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g. putting a box on a shelf), the use of a stepladder will have to be justified by taking into account:

- The height of the task
- A safe handhold still being available on the stepladder
- Whether it is light work
- Whether it avoids side loading
- Whether it avoids overreaching
- Whether your feet are fully supported
- Whether you can tie the stepladder

Consider tying a **stepladder** where possible and helpful to the task (e.g. side-on working or where 2 free hands are needed). Stepladders should not be used for access to another level unless they have been designed for this.

Is the ladder or stepladder safe to be used?

You must check that the ladder or stepladder is in a safe condition before using it (a daily pre-use check). As a guide, **only** use ladders or stepladders that:

- Have no visible defects
- Have a current detailed visual inspection (look for an inspection label)
- Are suitable for work use. Use EN 131 Professional ladders or stepladders at work because non-professional ones are not normally suitable for use at work
- Have been maintained and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Also, you must always use a non-conductive ladder or steps for any necessary live electrical work.

Pre-use checks

Look for obvious visual defects before using a ladder or stepladder. Check that:

- All the ladder feet are fitted
- The feet are in good repair (not loose, missing, splitting, excessively worn, secure etc)
- The feet are clean - the feet should be in contact with the ground. Ladder feet should also be checked when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g. dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g. paving slabs), to ensure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g. soil, embedded stones or swarf) is making contact with the ground
- All the screws, bolts and hinges are secure
- On a stepladder, that the "spreaders" on the ladder can be locked into place
- There are no other obvious signs of damage such as cracks.

If you find a problem, DO NOT USE the ladder. It should be repaired (if practicable) or destroyed

Storage

When storing ladders and stepladders, store them in a well-ventilated area to prevent sagging and warping. Store straight ladders in flat racks or on wall brackets, don't hand them from the rungs. Store step ladders in the closed, vertical position.

Lone Working

There are certain circumstances where two staff must always be involved and specifically, that a safe system of work should be followed e.g. working in confined spaces. If you think that the job cannot or should not be done safely alone discuss it with your manager or supervisor prior to starting.

Working alone can involve several scenarios. However, the following practical tips will apply to all of these:

- Always tell someone, record where you are going, when you are going and your expected time of return
- Take a mobile phone with you and ensure that it is charged in case you need to use it
- Ensure your manager or colleagues have a record of your mobile telephone number

- Keep valuables/cash to a minimum
- Maintain regular contact with colleagues or manager.

Home visits

When visiting people in their own homes it must always be recognised that you are far more vulnerable than in other situations, due to a number of factors, e.g. you are on their territory, you will be less familiar with the surroundings, prior to entering you will not know who is in the property.

When carrying out home visits the following advice must be taken into consideration:

- Wherever possible get to know the persons in advance. If in any doubt, discuss the visit with your manager, and if necessary go with another person
- If you are meeting someone unknown to you, check their authenticity before leaving for your appointment
- If possible arrange an initial meeting to take place at the office or a public place to give the opportunity to assess the person
- During visits ensure that your exit is never impeded
- Do not enter a property if the person you expect to see is not there
- Be alert at all times to signs that a situation is getting out of hand. If you feel that this is happening, make your excuses and leave immediately
- Be aware that people may have dogs or other animals in their home and these could be used to intimidate you. Where possible ask for them to be moved to a separate room (an exception may be when a dog is provided as a support for a disability)
- Always stay calm and do not return aggression as this may aggravate the situation
- Trust your instincts and act on them
- Report any conflict or incidents to your manager or supervisor.

Walking

Anyone who is on foot should develop a sensible level of awareness to danger that is relevant to the circumstances. The use of a few sensible precautions should minimise risks:

1) Walking safely

- Avoid short cuts through dimly lit or enclosed areas
- After dark keep away from bushes, doorways and alleyways
- Tell your manager or colleagues your precise destination and expected time of return
- Walk facing oncoming traffic, this avoids a vehicle coasting quietly upon you from behind
- Walk confidently and purposefully, avoid sending out signals of fear and vulnerability
- Do not wear a personal stereo, it will reduce awareness of your surroundings
- Wear sensible footwear, do not wear footwear which may impede your actions if alarmed
- If you think you are being followed, cross the street. If they continue to follow, move to the nearest place with people and call the Police using your mobile phone
- Keep your distance if asked for directions.

2) Carrying money and valuables safely

- Don't carry more cash than absolutely necessary
- Keep wallets/purses in inside pockets
- Carry handbags close to the body, on the side away from the kerb
- Make sure the fastening on the bag is secure
- If someone grabs your bag or wallet, let it go. Personal safety is paramount.

3) Be on guard with strangers

- Be cautious in conversation; don't give away any personal details
- Trust your instincts and avoid crowds or groups which may appear threatening
- Be wary of stationary vehicles with engines running and people sitting in them
- If a car stops and you are threatened, move away quickly in the opposite direction and use your mobile phone to call for assistance.

Driving

If you drive, a few sensible precautions will help minimise risks and help to make you more confident:

1) Before you set off

- Make sure your vehicle is regularly serviced and check oil and tyres etc regularly
- Ensure you have adequate fuel for the journey
- Plan your route
- Tell your manager, colleagues or Parish Priest your precise destination and expected time of return.

2) On the road

- Keep bags and other valuables out of sight – even during the journey
- Keep doors locked, windows and sunroof closed as much as possible, especially in stop/go traffic
- Do not pick-up hitch hikers
- If followed, drive to the nearest police station or concentration of people and call for assistance using your mobile phone.

3) Leaving the vehicle

- Always lock your vehicle and put anything of value out of sight
- If dark, or if it will be dark when returning to your vehicle, park in well-lit spaces, as near to your destination as possible
- Wherever possible, use a manned car park
- When parking, reverse your vehicle into a parking space and leave it as close to the exit as you can
- Have your keys ready when you return to your vehicle; check the interior for intruders before getting in.

4) If you break down

- Pull off the road as far as you can and if necessary switch on your hazard warning lights
- If someone offers help and you feel uncertain about them, stay in your vehicle (except on a motorway) with the doors locked and use your mobile phone to summon assistance. Do not get into a car with a stranger or try to hitch a lift
- Summon assistance using your mobile phone and give precise details of your location.

5) If you feel threatened

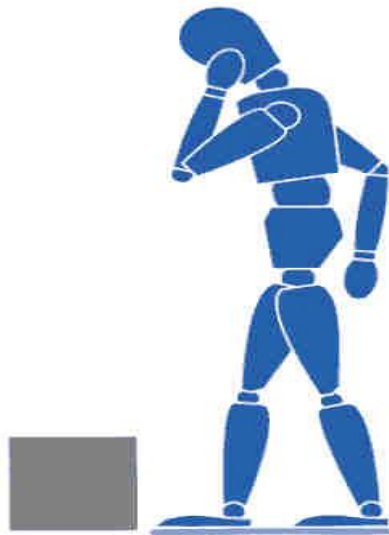
- If you're being followed, drive to a busy place
- If the occupants of a car beside you e.g. at traffic lights or a road junction try to attract your attention for any reason, simply ignore them
- If a car travels alongside you at the same speed, slow down and let them pass. If the driver persists, drive to a busy place and call the police
- If a car pulls up in front of you, forcing you to stop, leave the engine running, activate your hazard warning lights and sound your horn continuously. If the driver gets out and approaches you, reverse and get away.

Manual Handling

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD HANDLING TECHNIQUE

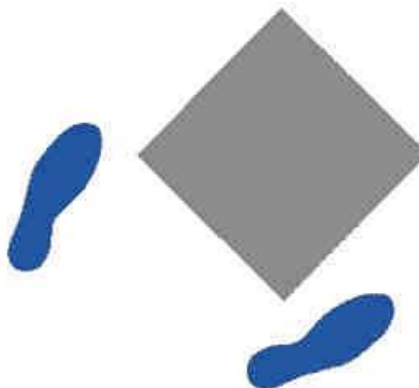
1 Planning

Plan the lift and consider: where the load is to be placed, what are the distances involved, are there any obstructions such as closed doors, is assistance required, and can handling aids or equipment be used?



2 Feet

The feet should be positioned a shoulder width apart, one foot ahead of the other in the direction of the intended movement.



3 Knees

Adopt a good posture for handling with the knees bent (not squat – don't kneel), in order to gain the most effective power from the thigh muscles.

4 Back

The back should be straight (not necessarily vertical, 15 - 20° from vertical is alright) keeping the natural curve of the spine. It may help to tuck in the chin. If necessary, lean forward a little over the load to get a good grip and to keep the centre of gravity over the load.

5 Arms

The arms should be close to the body (nearer the centre of gravity) with the shoulders level and facing the same direction as the hips.

6 Hands

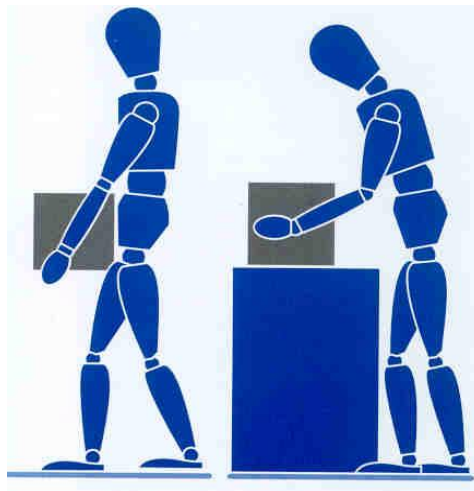
Ensure a firm grip on the load using the roots of the fingers and the palm of the hand. Holding the load this way is also less tiring than keeping the fingers straight.

7 Head

Raise the chin out and up as the lift begins, otherwise this results in round shoulders and a curved spine.

8 Moving the Load

Keep the load as close to the trunk for as long as possible, and where relevant, keep the heaviest side of the load close to the body. Slide the load towards you if required.



- Lift smoothly.
- Move the feet not the trunk when turning to the side i.e. don't twist.
- Put the load down and then slide the load into the required position if necessary.

9 Team handling

Handling by two or more people may make possible an operation that is beyond the capability of one person or reduce the risk of injury to a solo handler.



Additional difficulties may arise if team members impede each other's vision or movement, or if the load offers insufficient good handholds. This can occur particularly with compact loads which force the handlers to work close together or where the space available for movement is limited.

When lifting loads at or near floor level is unavoidable, it is preferable to use handling techniques which allow the use of relatively strong leg muscles rather than those of the back, provided the load is small enough to be held close to the trunk. In addition, if the task includes lifting to shoulder height, allow the handlers to change hand grip. Bear in mind however, that such techniques impose heavy forces on the knees and hip joints which must carry both the weight of the load and the weight of the rest of the body.

The closeness of the load to the body can also be influenced by foot placement. The elimination of obstacles which need to be reached over or into will permit the handler's feet to be placed beneath or adjacent to the load before beginning the manual handling operation.

Violence and Aggression

Work-related violence has serious consequences for employees, clergy, volunteers and the Archdiocese. Victims may suffer not only physical injury, but also psychological effects, such as anxiety and stress. The Archdiocese will take reasonable measures to protect you from acts of violence and aggression.

What is meant by violence?

An act of violence can be defined as:

- Actual or threatened physical assaults on staff
- Psychological abuse of staff
- Verbal abuse which includes shouting, swearing and gestures
- Threats against employees, clergy or volunteers



How will the Archdiocese support you?

There are a wide range of measures that the Archdiocese will follow to reduce the risk of violence at work to employees. The Archdiocese will:

- Carry out risk assessments of potential conflict situations to determine the control measures necessary to protect staff
- Ensure that premises are kept secure
- Inform all personnel of the procedure following a violent or challenging behaviour incident
- Not tolerate violence or challenging behaviour towards our personnel
- Train personnel who may be exposed to violence or challenging behaviour situations
- Support any personnel involved in any incident
- Support their decisions regarding the pressing of criminal charges
- Provide any counselling or post-incident assistance required by the personnel
- Keep records of all incidents of violence and aggression and review the control measures with a view to continual improvement in personnel safety

Diffusing the situation

In the event of violent or aggressive behaviour towards you there are several steps that you can try to diffuse the situation:

- **Act in control:** Even if you feel anxious or scared when confronted by an aggressor, try to give the impression that you are confident and in control of the situation. Anxiety is an entirely reasonable reaction to violent or aggressive behaviour, but if an aggressor notices it then it may increase their level of aggression.
- **Adopt a calm approach:**
 - Talk to the aggressor in a calm and respectful manner and keep the tone of your voice low.
 - If you have been summoned to assist with a violent or aggressive customer or person that you don't know, introduce yourself to the aggressor and ask what you can do to help.
 - Maintain a non-judgmental attitude and always focus your attention on the aggressor.
 - Let the aggressor talk without interruption and acknowledge how they are feeling. Remember that your aim is to calm them down, not to make sense of their complaint or issue.
- **Use body language:** Body language can reinforce or undermine the impression that you are trying to give.
 - Maintain neutral eye contact with the aggressor but try not to stare. Break eye contact every so often if necessary.
 - Keep your face relaxed, but don't smile. The aggressor will respond badly if they think that you are laughing at them or making light of the situation.
 - Keep your body language open and don't cross your arms or gesture with anything that could be perceived as a weapon. Stand a safe distance away from the aggressor and be aware of your nearest exit at all times.
- **Work towards a solution:** Wait for the aggressor to calm down. Explain the consequences of their aggressive behaviour respectfully but firmly. Suggest ways in which the situation could be resolved without conflict, and try to give the aggressor more than one solution so that they have some control over the situation.

If you are a witness or receive any violence or aggression towards you, then you should report this to your manager/supervisor/Parish Priest so that this can be recorded and investigated. The Archdiocese will support the decision of any employee wishing to press charges against the individual(s) involved. Access to counselling can also be provided where required.