

High Level Cleaning

High level cleaning and maintenance of premises is something many businesses need to carry out at regular intervals.

It is important not only for the overall cleanliness and look of a professional company building. It can also prevent dirt and accumulate rubbish that collects in roof spaces and along beams from falling onto employees or contaminating products and supplies that may be stored below as well as allowing for closer inspection and identification of any repair issues that may be looming but not yet visible from ground level.

Here is an example:

An employer owns a medium sized industrial unit employing 10 people. Plastic guttering at the roof edge had become blocked by loose leaves causing water to overflow and cause localised flooding within the yard. This in turn flowed into the factory causing damage to stock. The guttering is 5 m above the floor and the asbestos cement roof is sloping and has skylights, all of which are fragile materials.

Assessing the risk

Employers have a duty of care to employees and to the public, if affected. It may not be cost effective, or safe, to carry out this kind of work in-house. It will depend on the cost of hiring all the suitable safety equipment as well as ensuring all employees involved are properly trained to do the work.

The first step for any employer intending to have cleaning and maintenance done at high level is, therefore, to carry out a risk assessment to identify specific hazards.

This will need to cover the location, the height from and the state of the ground below, whether the work is to be inside or outdoors, even the weather forecast.

What tools will be needed to do the job and will a power supply be needed? Are any special cleaning or other materials needed that are covered by COSHH regulations? What safety equipment is needed and does it need to be hired?

What training to employees need? Does the company have adequate insurance?

There is plenty of information on the rules and on safety guidance when working at height website of the Health and Safety Executive:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/downloads.htm>

and

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/heightsafeleaflet.pdf>

Information courtesy of



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