



Dear Archdeacon

### **Working at height alert**

Over the last 18 months we have received several claims where church volunteers have fallen from height and, very sadly, a few of these have resulted in fatalities. Whilst we cannot share details of the individual claims and whilst thankfully falls from height are still relatively rare, they do happen, and the consequences can be devastating. Ecclesiastical has lots of resources to help parishes stay safe when considering working from height and it is this guidance that I wanted to remind you of today.

We fully understand that church volunteers all undertake tasks to support their churches, often without a second thought. During the summer months, when many churches are preparing for events and sorting out repairs and maintenance, this may involve reaching for the stepladder and working from height. Whilst using stepladders and ladders are familiar to many, using these items incorrectly can result in serious injury.

These tragic incidents give focus to the need to carry out any tasks at height safely, making sure that any works or access is properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people. And of course, if in any doubt, churches should always call out a qualified professional.

Falls can also occur from raised, open edges that are not adequately protected by handrails or other features. Sometimes, they can occur during roof work or where temporary work platforms are used (e.g. mobile access towers). It goes without saying, the higher up you are, the greater the risk.

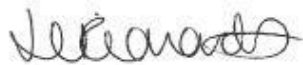
To help churches we have produced a range of guidance which can be found on our [website](#), including our handy Health and Safety toolkits on [Working at height](#) and [Safe use of ladders](#).

You may have seen this information before but in view of the recent incidents we wanted to share it again and kindly ask you to please share with your churches that this is available, together with plenty of other support and guidance to help them keep both people and property safe.

Also, Ecclesiastical church customers, can contact our in-house team of risk management experts direct via our Risk Advice Line on **0345 600 7531** should there be any questions or for more specific advice. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm, excluding bank holidays.

I hope that you and your churches will find this guidance a useful resource in helping to keep your staff, volunteers and supporters safe. If there are any other ways you think we can help please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely



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