



Beenleigh Interior Linings

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GUIDANCE NOTES

USE of PLASTERERS' STILTS

Purpose of These Guidance Notes

The purpose of these Guidance notes is to provide our employees, contractors and other users of stilts, with Health and Safety guidance on the use of plasterer's stilts in construction workplaces.

1. General Rules for Use of Stilts

Stilts should only be used for light duty tasks such as:

- placing of insulation batts
- installing furring channels
- screwing sheets to furring channels, trusses, underside of floor joists and walls
- patching, touching up and stopping of joints using a trowel
- fixing cornices
- minor hand sanding

Correct use of stilts:
A light duty task being conducted
on a clean floor



2. Work Area Layout

Workers are required to identify all potential stilts hazards such as:

- changes in the level or slope of the work area
- railings adjacent to edges
- wall or ceiling features (for example, arches, lights, bulkheads) that may restrict movement when using stilts
- floor penetrations, stairwells and voids
- windows
- inbuilt furniture

3. Work Area Conditions

Stilts should not be used where the ceiling height is greater than three metres. Also, work should not commence until the work area is “Plaster Ready” which, in this case, means:

- floor surfaces are solid, level and can support stilt work activity (eg: earthen floors have been concreted)
- floor surfaces have been cleared, swept and dry

- stilt workers need to move freely and without stepping over or moving around trip hazards, such as leads to work lights, hoses, packaging or dropped items (nails, screws, etc)
- plumbing and electrical work has been roughed in with switch positions and access points marked and lighting cables secured
- floor penetrations, stairwells and voids are covered or guarded in such a way that they can be clearly seen by stilt workers and offer them protection [Note: Guardrails effective at normal working heights are unlikely to be effective with stilt workers]
- furniture is removed and inbuilt furniture, such as kitchen cupboards or architectural features, is isolated or highlighted

Incorrect use of stilts –
Working in areas with earth
floor and/or poor housekeeping.



4. Work Planning and Conduct

Stilt workers should not commence work before risk control measures ensure that:

- other workers cannot affect the immediate work area being used by stilt workers, unless they are working as support for the stilt worker (If this cannot be guaranteed, the work area should be taped off or barricaded to prevent access)
- there is a safe means of attaching and removing stilts readily available
- any waste produced and material dropped by stilt workers is promptly cleared away (by an assistant) from the floor surface they are working on
- emergency procedures detail how stilt workers are to evacuate

5. Fatigue

Any one period of working on stilts should be not greater than 2 hours. Any further sessions should be separated by at least thirty minutes of non stilt tasks. Stilts should not be used by any individual for more than 6 hours per day.

Supervisors should regularly check that stilt workers are not experiencing fatigue. If stilt workers begin to experience fatigue, they should **immediately** remove their stilts.

6. Tools and Equipment

Only hand held tools (without leads) such as the following should be used by stilt workers:

- trowel
- hammer
- sanding block
- cordless screw gun

7. Avoid Bending or Reaching Down

The stilt worker's torso should be vertical whenever possible, so tasks that require frequent bending should be avoided.

All equipment and materials required by a stilt worker should be supported by a purpose-built stand (mobile or stationary) that enables the stilt worker to access them without over-reaching or bending down below knee level.

The height of the stand should be appropriate for the task being performed. Alternatively, tools and materials can be passed up to the stilt worker by another person standing on the floor.

**Incorrect Use of Stilts –
Reaching below foot level stresses
the knee, ankle, back and stilts.**



8. Training in the Use Stilts

Stilts must not be used without proper training. The plasterers' stilts must be from a recognised industry supplier who will provide instructions on their correct use that must be followed at all times.

A rigid platform should be used for mounting / dismounting stilts with the platform at a height equal to or greater than the height of the stilts. Stepladders are not to be used for mounting / dismounting stilts. Stepping up and balancing on one stilt then bending to fit the second is also not acceptable.

Trainees should be made aware of how the foot and ankle action changes when wearing stilts. Training should also include information on: work environment hazards; how to correctly adjust stilts so as to reduce fatigue and poor posture; and a briefing on what injuries can occur from the incorrect use of stilts.

The stilt worker should gain experience and confidence before working and also before performing tasks such as working with their head up, using tools in both hands or working at maximum height. They should also take every opportunity to remove the stilts when they are not necessary for the task.

9. Maintenance of Stilts

Stilt components must be examined regularly and any worn or damaged components replaced immediately. They also must be stored, serviced and maintained in accordance with the supplier's instructions.

10. When Stilts Should Not be Used

Stilts should NOT be used when:

- the work site is not "Plaster Ready"
- fatigue is observed or experienced
- the stilts are poorly maintained or not from a recognised industry supplier
- lifting or supporting plaster sheets (we recommend the use of a pneumatically powered plaster sheet lifter with large extension screw gun (pictured below) for this task)
- handling long, heavy or cumbersome objects or items, such as decorative cornices
- employees have not been properly trained in their use
- walking on stairs
- the floor level is not solid, changes height or slopes
- stepping into or over baths or other obstructions
- placed on a non-floor surface (such as tables, trestles, etc)
- walking backwards
- the springs are fully compressed (caused when lifting heavy objects or exerting high upward force, such as drilling through overhead structures)
- picking up items from below knee level
- standing on void covers that bend from the weight

- using inappropriate equipment such as trowel boxes, tools with power leads or hoses
- there is absence of a suitable mounting / dismantling platform
- the ceiling height is greater than 3 metres
- the task requires frequent bending or over-reaching

Pictured: a pneumatically-powered plaster sheet lifter with large extension screw gun



12. Acknowledgement

Please confirm that you have been instructed and trained in the usage of stilts, or that you have gained competency in their usage by other means. Please acknowledge that you have read and understood these guidelines by signing below:

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Date: ____/____/____ Witness: _____