# HOLDER OF WINDOW CLEANER'S LICENCE

# CONDITIONS

1. The Licensee shall, at all times while trading, have with him the Licence or such other means of identification issued by the Licensing Authority, and shall exhibit such licence or identification on demand to any customer, constable or authorised officer of the Licensing Authority. The identification issued by the Licensing Authority shall include the Licensee's name, a photograph showing his true likeness and the date on which the Licence expires, and must be displayed conspicuously on his outer garments at all times when trading.

2. The Licensee, or his employer, must be in possession of a level of Public Liability Insurance acceptable to the Licensing Authority.

3. The Licensee, whether self-employed or employed, must take all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Guidance Notes issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

## NOTES

### Introduction

Buildings, window openings and windows vary so much that no attempt has been made in these notes to lay down precise rules about the workplaces, or means of access for every situation window cleaners will face. Guidance is, however, given on accident prevention by the adoption of safe systems of work and the use of access equipment.

### Legislation

Windows usually need cleaning periodically and therefore cleaners will need access to each window. The means by which access is gained will be determined by various factors but systems of work must comply with the general provisions of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974.

Employers and building occupiers must provide and maintain plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health to employees or members of the public.

Self-employed persons and employees must ensure their own safety, so far as is reasonably practicable and ensure that members of the public are not exposed to risks.

Decisions about the provision of access and the method of work are not in themselves enough, they need to be supported by good supervision and appropriate measures to ensure that the window cleaners are in fact using the correct access and taking the precautions necessary for their own, and public, safety.

## Accidents

The most common accident is that of a cleaner falling from an external window sill, due to loss of balance as a result of a slip or breakage of part of a sill. Other accidents have been caused by falls through fragile roofing. Also very common are falls from ladders caused usually by the ladder slipping sideways. Most serious injuries are caused by falling from ladders, however, the majority of those cleaners who fall from ledges die.

If an external window sill or ledge is to be used by a cleaner, it is particularly important to take precautions. Remember that a window cleaner is at risk whenever he over reaches or works from a position where a slip or loss of handhold or foothold would result in a fall from the building.

## Ladders

A ladder is a simple, versatile and relatively inexpensive piece of equipment. The temptation therefore is to use it for all sorts of jobs without any attempt to consider whether the risk warrants an alternative method of work. Portable ladders should be of good construction, regularly examined and properly maintained; if defective they should not be used. A ladder should have a level and firm footing and precautions should be taken to prevent it sliding sideways at the top or outwards at the foot. This can be achieved by tying or hooking the top of the ladder and by a second person footing the ladder at the bottom.

If a ladder is placed against a surface which is not strong enough to withstand the imposed loads, eg a plastic gutter, the breakage of that surface could lead to a fall. Avoid placing a ladder where the user could be in danger from the movement of a vehicle or from overhead electricity lines.

The height at which a portable ladder will be unsuitable for window cleaning depends on the space available, the physical effort required for its erection and the cost. If a cleaner is working alone, the height he can reach will depend on the weight of the ladder, his strength and his skill in handling it. Cleaning beyond a height of say, 11 metres (36ft) would require two persons to handle the ladder.

## Safety Harnesses

Protection by means of a safety harness or belt should not be the first choice as it has the disadvantages that the cleaner has to accept the discipline involved in using the equipment and if he falls there is still a chance of injury before the fall is arrested. There will be circumstances, however, especially in older properties where it may not be reasonably practicable to use other means of access.

In such circumstances the use of a safety harness or belt attached to an anchorage may be the only precaution available, all other methods having been first considered.

Guidance on the design, construction and use of safety harnesses and belts is given in BS 1397 “Industrial Safety Belts, Harnesses and Safety Lanyards”.

Careful thought must be given to the provision of suitable anchorage points capable of sustaining the anticipated shock load. Excessive shock loads on the anchorage, the equipment and wearer should be avoided.

A specification for eyebolts and ancillary fittings, for permanent fixed anchorage, and recommendations for their installation, periodical inspection and examination is given in BS 5845 “Permanent Anchors for Industrial Safety Belts and Harnesses”.