

## Ladders and stepladders

<b>Reason</b>	Ladders are probably the most used and misused pieces of access equipment. Using ladders safely will help to prevent accidents.
<b>Outline</b>	This talk covers pre-use checks, safe use of ladders, the associated hazards and restrictions.



*Never overreach from a ladder – always move it*



*Attach ladders securely*



*Stepladder with integrated side guard-rails for additional protection*



- What checks should you carry out before use?
- At what angle should a leaning ladder be placed?
- How can the stability of the ladder be improved?
- What precautions should you take when using a metal ladder?
- What should you do if you find a defective ladder?
- What is the correct way to climb a ladder?
- What should you check before using a stepladder?



Ladders are permitted for access to and from working places, but should not be used where other equipment would be more appropriate.

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### Pre-use checks

1. Ladders and stepladders must be stored correctly and inspected regularly.
2. Check for splits or cracks in the stiles and rungs and check for missing or loose rungs.
3. Check whether the feet are worn or damaged. Worn feet can slip.
4. Check that the rungs are clean. Dirt or grease will make the rungs slippery.
5. Don't use painted wooden ladders, as paint can hide defects.
6. Report defects, label the ladder as defective and remove it from site.

### Safe use of ladders and stepladders

1. Only light work of a short duration, with a low risk of falling, should be carried out from a ladder. The risk assessment must identify that other forms of access equipment are not suitable given environmental conditions such as floor-to-ceiling height, space constraints or restrictions.
2. Ladders should be set on a firm base and lean at the correct angle (one unit out to four units up or 75°).
3. Ladders should be secured near the top and extend at least 1 m above the landing point, unless a separate handhold is provided. Many ladder securing systems are now available.
4. If the ladder can't be secured at the top, it may be possible to secure it lower down.
5. Always make sure that all four feet of a stepladder are on the ground.
6. Ensure your footwear is free from excessive mud or grease before you climb up the ladder.
7. When climbing up or down, use both hands on the stiles. Always face the ladder.
8. Never overreach from a ladder. Always move it. Never try to move a ladder while you are on it.
9. Only light tools and materials should be carried up ladders. A tool belt should be used.
10. Where a handhold cannot be maintained for anything other than a brief moment (such as starting to fix a nail which requires one hand to hold it and the other to hit it), other fall prevention measures are required.
11. Always report any defects in ladders.
12. Do not stand or work on the top three steps of a stepladder (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold.

### Hazards

1. Never stand a ladder on a drum, box, pallet, bricks, mobile access tower or other unstable base or moveable object.
2. Never attempt to use or repair broken ladders.
3. Only light materials and tools may be carried up ladders, in line with the risk assessment and manufacturer's information.
4. Never overreach or apply a side loading when working from a ladder or stepladder.
5. When using ladders, make sure there are no electrical hazards nearby (such as overhead power lines).

### Before using a ladder

The law requires that careful consideration is given before work is carried out from a ladder. Working from a ladder is only allowable if it is short duration (less than 30 minutes) and has been justified by a risk assessment. Remember that other forms of access equipment will often be more suitable.



**Now inform your workers of the company policy regarding the use of ladders.**