



## MSA Safety Talk for Working at Height - Ladders

***Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions on the job site.***

Much work involves accessing equipment or places deliberately put out of reach. We therefore need to use access equipment (steps, ladders, towers, and scaffolding) to get at it.

A few easily memorised rules can ensure ladder safety.

**Using a ladder is a last resort; you should always use other access equipment first, such as a fixed scaffold, scaffold tower or cherry picker. If you are using a ladder, check the risk assessment for the task; also ensure you are familiar with and competent in ladder use.**

### Key Points to consider are:

- CHECK – if the task requires access equipment rather than a ladder, STOP – ask your Manager or Supervisor for guidance, don't use a ladder unless it is safe to do so.
- Only use ladders where there is no safer alternative, plan your work and use platforms or fixed places of work rather than ladders where appropriate.
- Only use ladders for work of short duration and which can safely be done from a ladder, e.g., work requiring only one hand and within easy reaching distance.
- Ladders must be of sound material, strong enough for the purpose and properly maintained. (No splits, warping, decay, damage etc). A missing or defective run condemns a ladder automatically – check it before you use it every time.
- Ladders must have a firm footing for each stile and be secured at the foot and the base before use. If it can not be secured, ensure it is footed by a second person.
- Maximum height to be reached by a ladder is 9m unless a resting place can be provided, however this must be covered in the risk assessment. Greater heights require a scaffold or cherry picker to ensure a "Safe Place of Work".
- Ladders used for access must extend at least 1m above the landing place unless a separate designed handhold is provided.
- Ladders must be placed at a safe angle of approx. 75°. This means, distance from base of ladder to the wall should be  $\frac{1}{4}$  height reached by the ladder, check it before you use it.
- Only one person should stand on a ladder at one time, except when a second person is standing on the bottom rung to "foot" the ladder.
- Do not stretch or reach beyond the ladder, reposition the ladder ensuring that you continue to work safely
- When climbing or descending ladders, both hands are needed, so carry tools etc, in a shoulder bag or tool belt (or hoist them up afterwards).
- Do not use metal ladders near electrical equipment, check for overhead hazards before use.
- Do not use a ladder in a vehicle route or passageway unless protected by barriers or an assistant is constantly in attendance.
- Always inspect a ladder before using it and report immediately any defect or breaking of these rules. Make sure no one else can use the ladder either.

**Toolbox Attendance**

Questions? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Concerns? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Days since Last Incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor/Meeting Leader: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signatures of attendees:


Manager review comments:

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Manager signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_