



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 rung 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? _____

Concerns? _____

Days since Last Incident: _____

Supervisor/Meeting Leader: _____ Date: _____

Signatures of attendees:

Manager review comments:

Manager signature: _____ Date of Review: _____