

Toolbox Talk



Ladders

Ladders are not banned under health and safety law and can sometimes be a good practical solution for low risk, short duration tasks. Ladders should only be used by a competent person who fully understands the risks. Always make sure you use the right ladder and know how to use it safely.

Pre use safety checks should be carried out:

- By the user.
- At the beginning of the working day.
- After something has changed such as the ladder has been dropped or moved from a dirty to clean area.

What should you check?

Check the Stiles; Make sure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle and collapse. Timber stiles must be free from splits and breaks.

Check the Feet; If they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder can slip and check if the feet are dirty or wet as this alters the grip.

Check the rungs; If they are bent, worn, missing, broken or loose the ladder could fail.

Check the locking mechanism; if they are bent or fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse.

Check the platform (on a step ladder); if it is split or buckled the ladder will become unstable.

Check the steps; if they have been contaminated they could become slippery

If you spot any issues with the ladder you must notify your Leader immediately and do not use it. Mark the ladder 'damaged, out of use'.

Leaning and Step Ladders:

- Only carry light loads that allow you to maintain three point contact.
- Never over-reach.
- Don't work on the top 3 rungs or steps of the ladder.

Leaning Ladders:

- Make sure it is long enough and high enough for the task and extends 1m or 3 rungs above any platform.
- Make sure the ladder angle is at 75% (1 in 4 rule).
- Make sure the ladder is secured top and bottom.

Step Ladders:

- Make sure all 4 step ladder feet are on the ground at all times.
- Try to position the step ladder to face the work activity.

Always make sure the ladder is:

- On solid ground.
- On level ground.
- Where they will not be struck by passing vehicles .
- Where the general public cannot gain access to use it, pass beneath it or at risk because they are too near.
- Secured by tying or footing.

Working from a ladder:

- Avoid wherever possible.
- Only for short duration tasks.