

SECTION 3(10)

SAFE USE OF LADDERS

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Introduction

On average 14 people a year die at work falling from ladders and nearly 1,200 suffer major injuries. Ladders are the equipment in use when over a quarter of falls happen. Common causes of falls include: the user over-reaching, the user slipping from the rungs, and the ladder slipping and falling.

Ladders should only be used for low-risk, short-duration work, or where there are site conditions that cannot be changed. Where necessary, suitable arrangements should be taken to prevent the ladder from slipping, this could include tying the ladder at the top or bottom, or using an effective anti-slip device, or other stability devices.

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 came into effect on 6 April 2005. The Regulations will apply to all work at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. Under the new Regulations, all work at height is covered regardless of what height it is performed. **There is no 2-metre rule.** Risk assessment must be used to decide whether precautions are needed and in what form. Precautions will be required for all work involving ladders. The assessment must consider emergency and rescue planning, and take into account weather conditions when the work is being done outside. The Regulations place duties on employers, the self-employed, and any person who controls the work of others.

As part of the Regulations, duty holders must ensure:

- Avoid work at height where you can.
- All work at height is properly planned and organised.
- Follow the Risk Assessments you have carried out for work at height activities.
- Appropriate equipment for work at height is selected and used; the equipment is properly inspected and maintained.
- Measures must be in place to prevent falls when you cannot avoid working at height.
- Those involved in work at height are competent and trained (if being trained, they must be supervised by a competent person).
- Those involved in work at height follow good practice and comply with these Regulations.
- Follow the hierarchy for managing risks from work at height - take steps to avoid, prevent and reduce risks.

Selection, Care and Maintenance of Ladders and Stepladders

The selection and purchase of a ladder must be in accordance with the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992 and the Council's Purchasing Policy. Details of requirements are given in the Safety Advice Note entitled "Work Equipment".

All the company's ladders should have been individually identified. Don't use any other ladder, including any brought from home or belonging to other companies.

Every time you use a ladder check it beforehand to make sure it is safe to use. Frequently used ladders only need one such check a day - except for checking the feet when moving from soft/dirty ground to a clean area.

If you see any damage to a ladder, do not use it or try and repair it yourself. Remove it from use and report it. It is important to have clear on-site arrangements for storing ladders safely. Discuss and agree what your storage arrangements are; they should meet the manufacturer's recommendations.

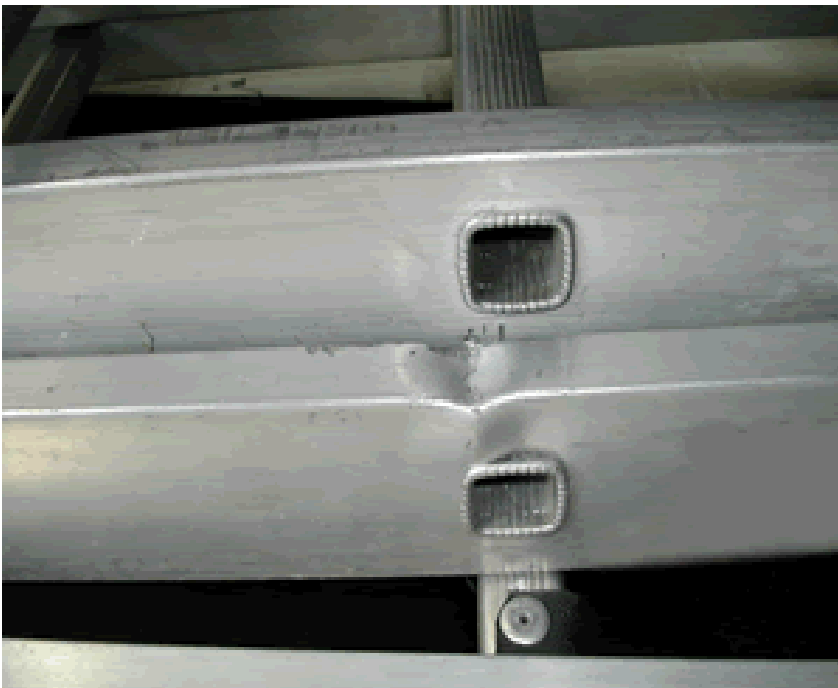
You should also have procedures in place for:

- Choosing the right ladders for the job (length and strength).
- Identifying each ladder so that you can keep track of it.
- Recorded inspections of ladders and stepladders every 6 months and a procedure for withdrawing unsafe ladders from use (see page).
- Ladder identification system and a ladder register (see pages 11 and 12).
- Secure storage away from sources of accidental damage.
- Providing adequate supervision by competent people.

Examples of Damaged Ladders



Missing ladder feet
– the ladder may slip, not repairable because of style

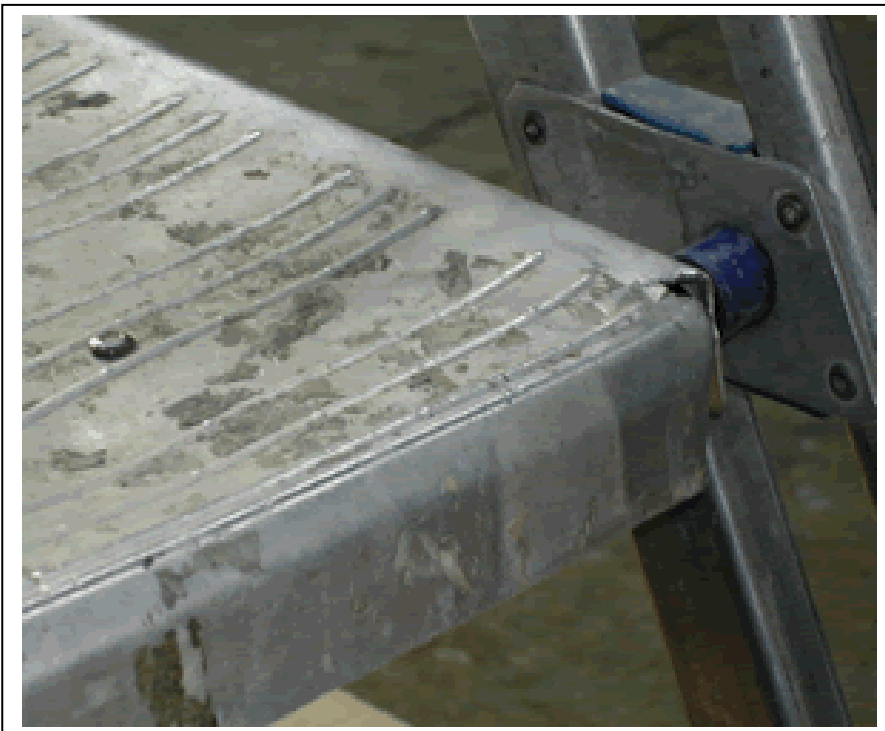


Dented,
weakened stiles
– the ladder may collapse, not repairable

Examples of Damaged Ladders



Steps covered in chemicals – reduced grip. Hinge screws have been pulled out – the ladder could become unstable or collapse, not repairable.

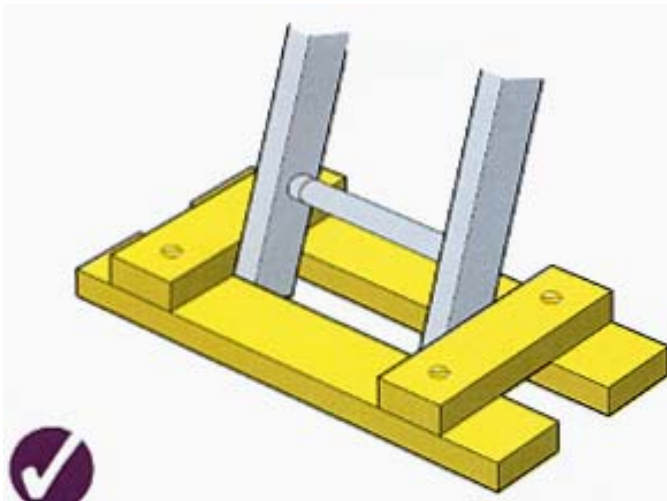


Split platform – the ladder could twist and fall if a load is applied to this area.

Set-Up for Ladders and Stepladders

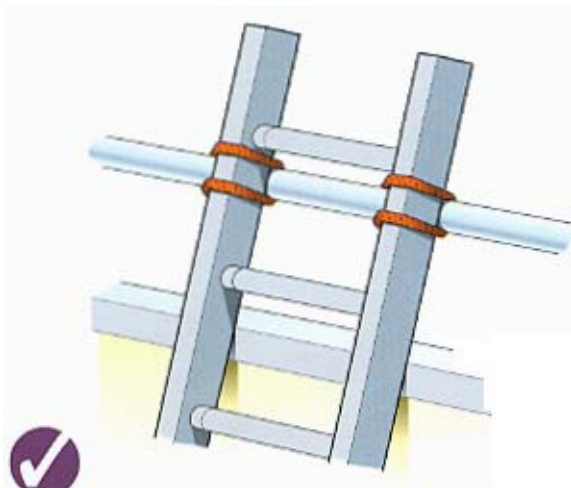
- Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- Secure it - see P1 and P2
- Ground should be firm and level
- Ladder angle 75° – 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up) - see P3
- Use any locking devices
- Maximum safe ground side slope 16° (level the rungs with a suitable device)
- Maximum safe ground back slope 6°
- Have a strong upper resting point (not plastic guttering)
- Floors should be clean, not slippery
- Ensure there is space to fully open stepladders

P1



Correct – securing at the base

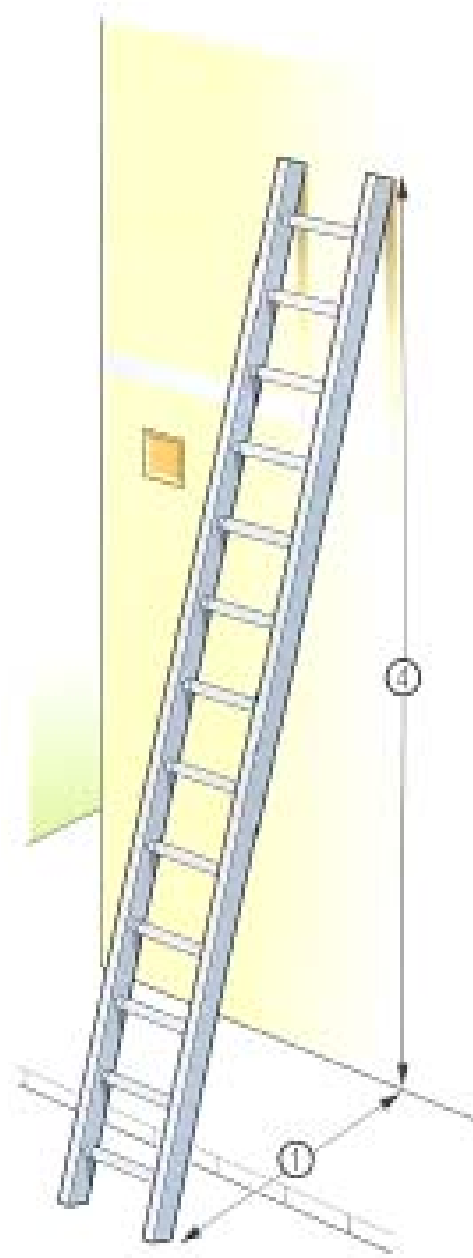
P2



Correct – ladder tied at top stiles
(correct for working on, not for access)

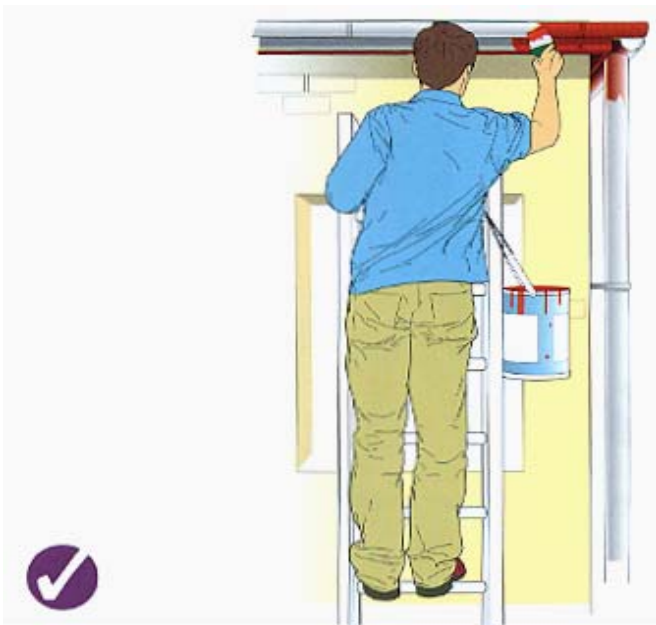
Ladder Angle 75° – 1 in 4 Rule – 1 Unit out for Every 4 Units Up

P3



Best Practice

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not overreach - make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- Do not work off the top three rungs – this provides a handhold
- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Do not work off the top two steps (top three steps for swing-back/double-sided stepladders) unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- Avoid side-on working
- Do not overreach – make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task



Correct – user maintaining three points of contact



Incorrect – over-reaching and failing to maintain three points of contact

Best Practice



Correct – rungs facing work activity



Incorrect – rungs side on to work activity

Ladder Register

Identification No	Type	Inspection Date*	Satisfactory Yes/No	Action Taken	Signature
		2012			
		2012			
		2013			
		2013			
		2014			
		2014			
		2015			
		2015			
		2016			
		2016			
		2017			
		2017			
		2018			
		2018			
		2019			
		2019			
		2020			
		2020			
		2021			
		2021			
		2022			
		2022			

***Insert date of the 6-monthly inspection**

Ladders and Stepladders Inspection Form

Name in BLOCK capitals:	
Signature:	
Location:	
Time:	Date:

Item	Satisfactory		Defect	Action Required		Follow-Up Action		Comments
	Yes	No		Immediate	Follow-Up	Carried Out By	Date Completed	
Construction								
British Standard								
Wear								
Rungs								
Ropes/chains								
Splinters								
Distortion								
Training								
Staff instructed								
Staff trained								
Storage								
Correct support								
Protected								
Secure								
Other information								

Further Information

[falls from height](#)