

Ladders

Are you sure you should be using a ladder?

Always ask yourselves this question for all types of ladder (pole ladder, stepladders, etc) and the answer is probably no.

Ladders are at the bottom of the work at height hierarchy and we would normally expect you to use a tower scaffold or similar equipment that gives you a protected platform. There are very good reasons for this – a lot of people have fallen off ladders.

If you intend to use a ladder, you will need to justify its use through a written risk assessment – the following applies where their use is justified.

Before use checks:

- Ladders must be stored correctly and inspected regularly.
- Check for splits or cracks in the stiles and rungs.
- Ensure that none of the rungs are missing or loose.
- Don't use painted ladders, this can hide damaged parts.
- Report defects, label as defective and remove from site.

Using Ladders:

- Ladders should be set on a firm base and lean at the correct angle, which is **one** unit out to **four** units up.
- Ladders must be tied near the top and extend a safe distance above the landing stage, unless a hand-hold is provided.
- Ensure your footwear is free from excessive mud or grease before you climb up the ladder.
- When climbing up or down, use both hands on the stiles. Always face the ladder.

Using Stepladders:

- Use on a firm, level base.
- Don't work higher than two-thirds up stepladder (hand-hold).
- Don't use boards between the treads on steps to provide a working platform – they are not designed for this loading.
- If equipped with outriggers, use them!
- If equipped with a protected platform at the top – close the gate!
- Don't overreach from a ladder, always move it.
- Keep the area at the bottom of the ladder clear.

Questions:

- 1 What is the hierarchy for working at height?
- 2 What pre-use checks should you make if using a ladder is justified?
- 3 At what angle should a ladder be placed?

Further Information:- CIP Manual, Section 7