

Minimum Standard and Guidance for Working at Height

This document is intended to set out the minimum standard and parameters for the selection and safe use of access equipment for working at height

Ladders and step ladders should only be used for tasks that are low risk and short duration, or there are existing workplace features which cannot be altered

Short duration is not the deciding factor in establishing whether use of a ladder is acceptable – you must have first considered risk. As a guide, if your task would require staying up a leaning ladder or stepladder for more than 30 minutes at a time, it is recommended you use alternative equipment

You should only use ladders in situations where they can be used safely, e.g. where the ladder will be level and stable, and can be secured (where it is reasonably practicable to do so) and 3 points of contact maintained

Alternative equipment must be considered when your feet are more than 3.0m off the ground when carrying out a work activity other than conducting visual inspections

Access equipment	Minimum standard and guidance
Hop ups 	Must be Class 1: Industrial Items such as “Milk crates”, pallets, sawhorse / folding trestles, chairs etc must not be used as access equipment
Crawl boards 	Ensure they are placed on ceiling joists, not directly on pipes or electrical cables, and avoid exceeding the maximum weight limit If using own ladder to gain access to a loft space, raise it to the maximum to provide a stable stepping on/off point, and where possible secure the top of the ladder else use an anti-slip ladder mat at the bottom
Step ladders 	Must be Class 1: Industrial Ensure ladder has been inspected, has an in-date ladder tag and carry out a visual safety check before each use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not stand and work on the top three steps • Ensure any locking devices are fully engaged • Use tool belts and accessories such as trays and hooks • Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on. Avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling • Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands needed, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder
Telescopic ladders 	These must only be used for access, such as inspections or survey work Ensure ladder has been inspected, has an in-date ladder tag and carry out a visual safety check before each use. Always check all sections are locked before using the ladder

Existing stairs and stairwells	 <p>Careful consideration must be given to the use of step ladders and ladders on steps and staircases due to the increased risk of falls. Step ladders must be the adjustable type and set up to accommodate the risers and treads, and any slipping or movement risk. Likewise, ladders must be level, slipping or movement risk controlled and proprietary levelling blocks or adjustable leg accessories used. Designed 'Stair Safe' systems should be used for activities such as plastering, or if using mobile stair towers you must be PASMA qualified.</p>
Mobile towers	 <p>Must be erected, modified and dismantled by a PASMA qualified person. Ensure the tower has been inspected, has an in-date inspection tag and carry out a visual safety check before each use. Only access by climbing the internal ladder and hatches, ensure toe boards are fitted, do not overload or overreach and check the ground is firm and level. Castors should be locked and stabilisers deployed when required.</p>
Scaffolding	 <p>Must be erected and dismantled by a CISRS qualified scaffold er. Always ensure the scaffold is safe to use before accessing - visually check to make sure there is no obvious damage or missing boards or handrails, check the Scaff-tag to verify it has been inspected in the last 7 days. If the Scaff-ag has been 'pulled' – seek advice. Ensure the self-closing ladder gates are working correctly. Always remove the ladder when not in use or refit and lock the ladder guard to prevent unauthorised access.</p>
MEWP's	 <p>Only competent persons that hold a valid IPAF qualification can operate Mobile Elevated Working Platforms (MEWP's) and scissor lifts.</p>
Harnesses and fall arrest restraint systems	 <p>Only trained and competent persons can use fall arrest equipment such as a full body harness, lanyards and fall arrest systems (i.e. inertia blocks) and restraint systems (i.e. fixed length short lanyard).</p>
Specialist cleaning equipment	 <p>Where extensive gutter or window cleaning is required, especially on buildings other than single storey, priority should be given to using systems than can be used from the ground to avoid working at height, such as telescopic poles and extendable gutter cleaning vacuum systems. Ladders can be used to visually inspect high level gutters before, during and after cleaning.</p>
Further guidance available on Evotix Assure Go+ HSE: INDG401 'Working at height - A brief guide' Ladder Association: LA455 'Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders - A brief guide'	

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Access equipment	Minimum standard and guidance
Ladders 	<p>Must be Class 1: Industrial</p> <p>Ensure ladder has been inspected, has an in-date ladder tag and carry out a visual safety check before each use</p> <p>1. Level Surface:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position the ladder on a stable, level surface. Avoid uneven ground or slippery surfaces <p>2. Base Securing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tying Off: Secure the base of the ladder to a sturdy anchor point using rope, webbing, or a ladder strap. Make sure to tie both stiles (the side rails) of the ladder for maximum stability Ladder Stability Devices: Use an anti-slip ladder mat and other ladder stability devices, such as ladder stays or stabilisers, to prevent sideways slipping Wedge or Cleat: If tying off isn't possible, consider wedging the ladder against a wall or using a cleat (a piece of wood or metal) nailed to the floor to prevent slipping <p>3. Top Securing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tying to Structure: If possible, tie the top of the ladder to a solid structure like or strong anchor point, avoiding anything that could break or move Ladder Anchors: Use ladder anchors (eye bolts) inserted into the structure for a secure tie-off point Ladder Stay/Stabilizer: Attach a ladder stay to the ladder and the structure it's leaning against, especially on smooth surfaces <p>4. Footing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a last resort, have someone "foot" the ladder while you're using it <p>5. Additional Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-slip Feet: Ensure the ladder has non-slip feet Rung Locks: Engage all rung locks securely Avoid Guttering: Don't rest the top of the ladder on gutters, windows, or other fragile surfaces Three Points of Contact: Always maintain three points of contact (two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand). If you can't then use alternative means Clear Area: Remove any debris around the base of the ladder Look up: Do not work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line

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