

S31 – Toolbox Talk

Working at Height – Ladders

There are numerous tasks which require access gained by using a ladder. The following aspects need to be considered:

- Slipping on a rung causing a fall from height
- Dropping objects eg small tools from height
- Ladder slipping causing a fall from height
- Overhead electric lines.

The following will help to make work involving ladders less hazardous:

- Before using a ladder, inspect it for faults such as broken rungs or rails. If it is an extension ladder, inspect the pulleys, ropes and locks for excessive wear. Also, check the footings and pads to make sure they still provide a non-skid surface. If any defect is found, the ladder should be tagged unsafe and taken out of service. If it cannot be fixed, make sure it is disposed of properly
- When setting up a ladder, make sure the ground it is set upon is level and stable. Do not set the ladder up on a muddy surface or you may find yourself falling over. Do not use bricks or other materials to raise the height of the ladder. If it is not tall enough, you are using the wrong ladder
- Post notices informing people that a ladder is erected and there may be a danger of falling objects
- Check your footwear to ensure it is free from mud, oil or anything that may cause you to slip
- Be aware of any overhead electric lines before positioning the ladder (Note: Wooden ladders can conduct electricity especially if wet)
- Ensure the ladder is at an angle no greater than one metre out for every four metres in height. This means if you are using a 12 foot ladder, the base should be three feet from the structure. Some ladders have a picture guide on the ladder itself to assist you
- The ladder must be secured, preferably at the top, to prevent it from slipping. If this is not possible, secure it at the bottom. If it cannot be secured either at the top or the base, then a second person (wearing a safety helmet) must stand on the base. Note: This method should not be used for ladders over six metres
- The ladder must reach at least one metre above the landing place or above the highest rung on which you have to stand, unless there is an equivalent suitable handhold
- With the exception of the person footing the ladder, two people should not be on the ladder at any one time
- When using a stepladder, make sure the folding cross braces are locked in the proper position before you step onto it



- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending, and have both hands free to grasp it securely. If you need tools, they should be carried in a tool belt or pulled up with a rope once you have reached your destination
- Remember the 'Three-Point Rule': At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with the ladder at all times
- Never attempt to climb a ladder carrying a heavy or bulky load. Use a belt or rope to leave your hands free
- Do not over-reach from a ladder, lash ladders together, slide down ladders, use a ladder as a horizontal working platform, or use it on a temporary platform to gain additional height, eg on scaffolds
- Keep your body between the side rails of the ladder. This reduces the chance of tipping it over and/or falling off
- Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top on straight or extension ladders or the second tread from the top on stepladders
- Always ensure that after use, the ladder is stored securely to prevent accidental damage or unauthorised misuse.

Training register

Date

Name of attendee

Signature

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