

Ladders and stepladders

About 5 minutes · Read it out, then ask the questions at the end.

Why it matters. Ladders are not banned, but they are for short, simple, low-risk jobs only. Many falls happen from ladders that were the wrong choice or set up badly.

The hazards

- Ladder slipping at the base or top
- Overreaching and losing balance
- Damaged stiles, rungs, feet or locking bars
- Carrying heavy or awkward loads up a ladder
- Using a ladder near overhead power lines

Stay safe

- Use a ladder only for short-duration work where a safer platform isn't reasonable
- Check the ladder before every use: stiles, rungs, feet and locks
- Set leaning ladders at about 75°, the 1-in-4 rule: 1 unit out for every 4 units up
- Make sure a leaning ladder goes at least 1m above the landing point
- Secure the ladder, or foot it if it can't be tied
- Keep three points of contact and face the ladder
- Don't overreach: keep your belt buckle inside the stiles
- Lock stepladder braces fully and don't stand on the top three steps unless there is a handhold
- Take damaged ladders out of use and tell your supervisor

Ask the team

1. When should we use a podium or tower instead of a ladder?
2. What do you check on a ladder before you use it?
3. What is the 1-in-4 rule?

The law and guidance

Work at Height Regulations 2005. HSE INDG402, Safe use of ladders and stepladders.

General guidance to help you give a toolbox talk. It doesn't replace your site's risk assessments, method statements, permits or training. Check it against your own site rules before you give it.

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Site: _____ Date: _____

Given by: _____ Company: _____

By signing, I confirm I attended this toolbox talk and understood it.

Name (print)	Company	Signature	Time

Keep this record with your site's training and briefing records.