

Ladders in Maintenance & Construction

Ladders and stepladders are among the most commonly used pieces of access equipment on site and perhaps the most misused. Where work at height is necessary you need to justify whether a ladder or stepladder is the most suitable equipment compared to other access equipment. This is done by following the hierarchy of control and using risk assessments. Make certain there is no safer means of access before using a ladder or stepladder, even for short-duration work. Many accidents result from using ladders for a job when a tower scaffold or MEWP would have been safer and more efficient.

If the assessment indicates that more suitable equipment is not justified, a ladder or stepladder may be used:
 for short-duration work (15-30 minutes in one position depending on the risk assessment);
 for light work (they are not suitable for strenuous tasks which may involve carrying materials or supporting components, eg guttering);
 and if a secure handhold is available.

On a ladder or stepladder:

Do not overload it – the person and their equipment should not exceed the highest stated load.

Do not overreach – keep your belt buckle inside the stiles and both feet on the same rung.

Check the ladder is secure. Almost half of the accidents involving ladders happen because the ladder was not prevented from falling or slipping. The options for securing a ladder are as follows:-tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied where this is not practicable, use an unsecured ladder supplemented with an effective ladder stability device (eg a ladder stay and anti-slip device).

Such devices must ensure that the ladder does not run sideways, slide away from the wall or rotate about a stile; securely wedge the bottom of the ladder to prevent it sliding, eg against a wall; footing the ladder is the last resort and

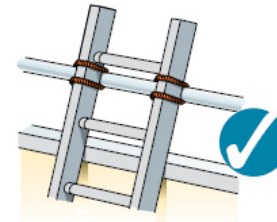


Figure 18a Ladder tied at top stiles (correct for working on, not for access)

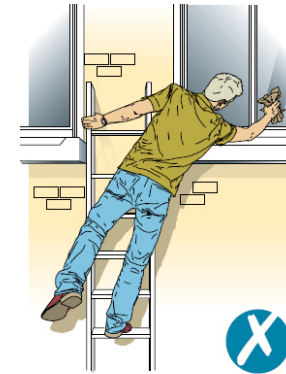


Figure 17a Incorrect - overreaching and not maintaining three points of contact

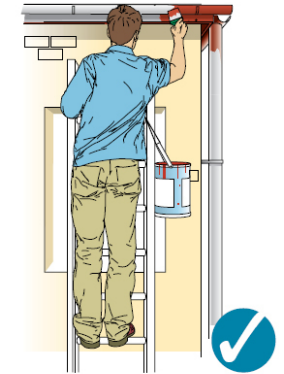


Figure 17b Correct position maintaining three points of contact



Figure 18b Tying part way down

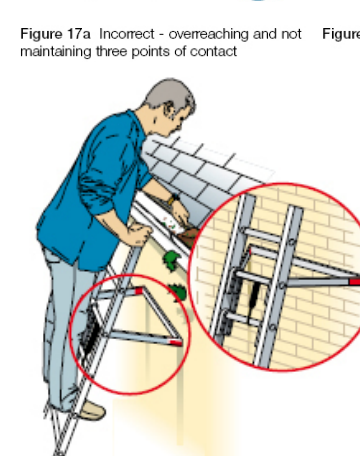


Figure 9 Stand-off device and working maximum height on a ladder

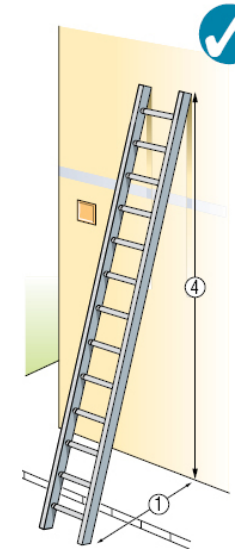


Figure 19 Ladder showing correct 1 in 4 angle (means of securing omitted for clarity)

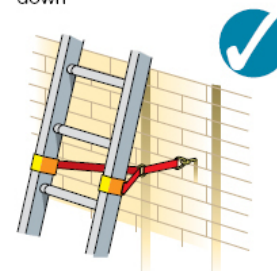


Figure 18c Tying at base

Ref Doc:- HSG 150 or Indg 402