

Ladder Safety

Fact: This information paper is to provide guidelines to effectively choosing, setting up and using ladders.



Key Definitions:

Three points of contact

Three points of contact is when you have two feet and one hand, or two hands and one foot on the ladder

Working at Height

Work at Height is defined as whenever people are at risk of falling from, into or through one level to another.

Choosing your ladder

- Always choose the best equipment for the job e.g. a mobile scaffold or elevating work platform may be safer than a portable ladder.
- If a ladder is the best option, ensure the type of ladder you have chosen is properly suited to the task and of adequate strength e.g. manufactured for industrial use and with a load rating of least 120 kilograms.
- Always inspect the ladder before use to ensure it is in a good working condition.



Setting up a ladder

- Always check for overhead powerlines before attempting to set up a ladder e.g. ladders rubber feet.
- Do not use a ladder in an access area (e.g. doorway, passageway or driveway) unless the area has been blocked off or traffic has been safely redirected
- Clear any rubbish or obstructions from around the base and top of the ladder
- Ensure the ladder is set up on a firm surface and placed at a safe angle (1:4 is optimum)
- Secure either the base or top of the ladder to prevent it moving (e.g. tie the ladder to a secure point or ask another person to hold the base of the ladder).

Using a ladder

- Always maintain three points of contact when using a ladder
- Always face the ladder when climbing up or down and when working
- Three points of contact must be maintained whilst working from a ladder, if this cannot be achieved then a fall arrest harness system that is not attached to the ladder must be used.

- Do not overreach while working from a ladder. Your body should be centred between the stiles of the ladder
- Avoid climbing up and down a ladder while carrying anything in your hands. Don't handle equipment that will restrict your movement or cause you to lose balance
- Keep your shoes free of grease or other slippery materials while using ladders
- Do not stand higher than the tread or rung indicated on the ladder as the highest standing level
- Do not stand on the top cap or the top tread of a self-supporting ladder, above the second top rung of a non self-supporting ladder or on the rear horizontal braces of a single-sided, self-supporting ladder
- A ladder used for access must extend at least one metre above the level where a person exits the ladder.

Legislation

Work Health and Safety Act 2011(Qld)

Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld)

Managing the Risk of Falls at Workplace Code of Practice 2011

Australian Standard AS 1657-2013 Fixed platforms, walkways, stairways and ladders - Design, construction and installation

