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Health and Safety
Executive

Top tips for ladder and stepladder safety



Set-up for leaning ladders

- Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- Secure it
- Ground should be firm and level
- Maximum safe ground side slope 16° (level the rungs with a suitable device)
- Maximum safe ground back slope 6°
- Have a strong upper resting point (not plastic guttering)
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

Leaning ladders in-use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Ladder angle 75° – 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not overreach - make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task
- Do not work off the top three rungs – this provides a handhold

Set-up for stepladders

- Daily pre-use check (feet included)
- Ensure there is space to fully open
- Use any locking devices
- Ground should be firm and level
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

Stepladders in-use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Do not work off the top two steps (top three steps for swing-back/double-sided stepladders) unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- Avoid side-on working
- Do not overreach – make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task

Further information

Safe use of ladders and stepladders: An employers' guide INDG402 HSE Books 2005 (single copy free or priced packs of 5 ISBN 0 7176 6105 9)

More information can be found at:
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/index.htm>

For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline
Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566 Textphone:
0845 408 9577 e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com or write to
HSE Information Services, Caerphilly Business Park,
Caerphilly CF83 3GG, or visit the HSE website:
www.hse.gov.uk

This pocket card contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

This pocket card is available in priced packs of 25 from HSE Books, ISBN 0 7176 6127 X. Single free copies are also available from HSE Books, Tel: 01787 881165.

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