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Using ladders safely

On average 13 people a year die at work falling from ladders and nearly 1200 suffer major injuries. More than a quarter of falls happen from ladders.

HSE's key message is that ladders should only be used for low-risk, short-duration work.

What do I need to know?

Work at Height Regulations 2005

The Work at Height Regulations (2005) came into force in April 2005. Employers have a duty to assess the risks, plan and supervise all workers who work at height. You will find guidance about the regulations in:

- **The Work at Height Regulations 2005: a brief guide**

Topics include:

- What is 'work at height'?
- What the regulations cover
- Do the rules apply to you?
- What you must do as an employer

When can ladders be used?

Ladders can be used if after assessing the risks the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and short duration.

Short duration is taken to be between 15 and 30 minutes depending upon the task.

Ladders can also be used for low risk work where there are features on the site that mean a ladder must be used.

Common causes of falls

Common causes of falls include those where:	You can help prevent this type of fall if you:
The user over-reaches	Keep your body centred within the ladder
	Always keep three points of contact with the ladder
The user slips from the ladder	Keep the rungs clean and in good condition
	Wear non-slip footwear, if necessary clean the soles before using the ladder
	Are fit to work at height
	Are trained to use a ladder
	Keep three points of contact with the ladder
	Make sure the rungs are horizontal
The ladder wobbles, slips and falls	Position the ladder correctly on a firm, level surface
	Check the feet of the ladder daily
	Fasten the ladder at top and bottom
	Rest the ladder on a firm surface at the top
The ladder breaks	Position the ladder properly, use the 1 in 4 rule for leaning ladders

Common causes of falls include those where:	You can help prevent this type of fall if you:
	Do not exceed the maximum weight limit on the ladder
	Only carry light materials or tools (up to 10kg)

Is a ladder right for the job?

If you are not sure that it is right to use a ladder speak to your supervisor or the safety representative or alternatively call **SGB on 0870 442 1869**

You can also contact HSE Infoline on 0845 345 0055