

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 Requirements for ladders

1. A ladder may only be used for work at height where the risk assessment demonstrates that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and -
 - a. use will be of short duration; or
 - b. there are existing features on site which cannot be altered.
2. Any surface upon which a ladder rests must be stable, firm, of sufficient strength and of suitable composition safely to support the ladder so that its rungs or steps remain horizontal, and any loading intended to be placed on it.
3. A ladder shall be so positioned as to ensure its stability during use. Ladders should be placed at an angle of 75 degrees (Ratio of 1:4 horizontal to vertical)
4. A suspended ladder shall be attached in a secure manner and so that, with the exception of a flexible ladder, it cannot be displaced and swinging is prevented.
5. A portable ladder shall be prevented from slipping during use by -
 - a. securing the stiles at or near their upper or lower ends;
 - b. an effective anti-slip or other effective stability device; or
 - c. any other arrangement of equivalent effectiveness.
6. A ladder used for access shall be long enough to protrude sufficiently above the place of landing to which it provides access, unless other measures have been taken to ensure a firm handhold.
7. No interlocking or extension ladder shall be used unless its sections are prevented from moving relative to each other while in use.
8. A mobile ladder shall be prevented from moving before it is stepped on.
9. Where a ladder or run of ladders rises a vertical distance of 9 metres or more above its base, there shall, where reasonably practicable, be provided at suitable intervals sufficient safe landing areas or rest platforms.
10. Every ladder shall be used in such a way that -
 - a. a secure handhold and secure support are always available to the user; and
 - b. the user can maintain a safe handhold when carrying a load unless, in the case of a step ladder, the maintenance of a handhold is not practicable when a load is carried, and a risk assessment under regulation 3 of the Management Regulations has demonstrated that the use of a stepladder is justified because of -
 - i. the low risk; and

ii. the short duration of use.

11. When in use, over-reaching must be avoided.

12. Ladders and other forms of access equipment should be inspected regularly, including before and after use, and if any defect is found immediate action should be taken. Wooden ladders and steps must not be painted. They should be checked for rot, decay or mechanical damage such as warped stiles, excessive cracks, splintering and wear and tear at the head and foot of the stiles. Rungs should be checked for looseness, excessive wear, or decay where the rung enters the stile. Metal ladders should be checked for twisting, distortion, oxidation, corrosion and excessive wear, especially on the treads. A formal inspection must be recorded in addition to user checks. This should be annual as a minimum. In harsher environments (e.g. construction sites) a more frequent formal check should be carried out.