

2B. Ladders, stepladders and kick stools

Ladders and stepladders

When to use:

Ladders or stepladders should only be used if:

- The task does not require working in the same high point for more than 30 minutes;
- The maximum height of any work area is 5m (this means the operatives head may be slightly higher than 5m during the work);
- A handhold is available on the ladder; and
- Three points of contact can be maintained at the working position while undertaking the task.



Figure 1a Incorrect
- overreaching and not
maintaining three points
of contact



Figure 1b Correct - user
maintaining three points
of contact

Selection and use:

The following requirements apply to all ladder use:

- Consideration should be given to the type of work involved – metal ladders should not be used for electrical works;
- Domestic Ladders should NOT be used – all new ladders must meet current BS EN131 or existing ladders the previous UK Class 1 or EN131 standards. All ladders and stepladders must be marked with their appropriate standard;
- Access ladders for scaffold must be secured at the top and another point;
- Unsecured ladders must be footed by a person or ladder mate; and
- Distractions should, if at all possible, be avoided by those working on or footing a ladder (for example mobile phones should not be answered etc.).

Maintenance:

- The treads and feet of ladders should be kept clean to prevent slips during use;
- Broken feet can be repaired/replaced (if parts are available); and
- If a ladder has a damaged rail or treads it should be removed from service and disposed of.

Storage:

- Ladders should be removed from the work area following the task, and stored in a clean and dry location in a way to minimise the risk of possible damage from other objects and area users.

Registration and inspection:

- Ladders should be registered with the appropriate departmental ladder inspector. SHE Group can advise who this is.
- The appropriate person should record:
 - Unique departmental identification number;
 - Type of ladder;
 - Size; and
 - Storage location.
- The unique identification number provided should be indelibly marked on the ladder;
- In addition to regular inspection by the user, all ladders should be checked at regular intervals (at least annually) by a competent Ladder Inspector, appointed by SHE Group.
- All registered ladders should have a 'scaf-tag' attached to them for inspection purposes. This is to enable all users to clearly see if a ladder is in date or not prior to use.

Kick stools

Selection and use:

The following requirements apply to use of kick stools:

- Kick stools should only be used for low risk tasks of very short duration where a stepladder would not be practical e.g. to reach a book on a high shelf;
- Inspect the kick stool for damage prior to every use;
- Do not overreach or stretch whilst using the kick stool – this could result in a loss of balance. If you can't reach the object comfortably, alternative access equipment, such as a stepladder, should be used;
- The kick stool needs to be used in such a way that it is prevented from slipping on the surface;
- The surface must be level and clear of contamination (e.g. oils, greases) to allow the kick stool to keep good contact with the floor;
- Any items that are carried / handled should be relatively small and lightweight; and
- Keep both feet on the kick stool at all times.

Maintenance:

- Check kick stools regularly to ensure they are in good condition:
 - Check all the wheels are present and rotate freely;
 - Check the rubber ring on the base is fixed in position;
 - Check the rubber surfaces on the bottom and top step are free from contamination;
 - Check for cracks or other signs of damage; and
 - Check the kick stool engages when you stand on it.
- If damage is found, the kick stool should be removed from service and disposed of.

Registration and inspection:

- Kick stools should be registered with the appropriate departmental ladder inspector. SHE Group can advise who this is.
- The appropriate person should record:
 - Unique departmental identification number; and
 - Storage location.
- The unique identification number provided should be indelibly marked on the kick stool.
- In addition to regular inspection by the user, all kick stools should be checked at regular intervals (at least annually) by a competent Ladder Inspector appointed by SHE Group.