

**Annex A to Method Statement 3****Safe Use of Ladders****Introduction:**

Every year many people are killed or injured while using ladders on construction sites. More than half the accidents occur because ladders are not securely placed and fixed, and most happen when the work is of 30 minutes duration or less. Other causes of accidents include climbing ladders while carrying loads, over-reaching and over-balancing.

**Securing the Ladder**

The foot of the ladder should be supported on a firm level surface and should not rest either on loose material or on other equipment to gain extra height.

Wherever practicable the top of the ladder should be securely fixed to the structure so that it cannot slip. Lashings can be used, straps or proprietary clips. While lashings etc are being secured the ladder should be footed by someone.

If the ladder cannot be secured at the top it should be secured at the base using fixing blocks or cleats, sandbags, or if appropriate by stakes embedded in the ground. Where it is not practicable to do this a second person should foot the ladder until the user has returned to the bottom. Serious accidents have occurred because the person responsible for footing the ladder has wandered off to do other work.

Footing is not considered effective for ladders longer than 5m!

**Safe use of Ladders:**

Different grades of ladder are available. Ensure that the ladder chosen is strong enough for the work planned.

**DO NOT OVERLOAD LADDERS - THEY ARE LIABLE TO BREAK!** Only one person should be on the ladder at anyone time.

Ensure that the ladder is in good condition.

**DO NOT CARRY OUT MAKESHIFT REPAIRS TO A DAMAGED LADDER!**

Ensure that ladders are examined at regular intervals for defects such as cracked stiles and rungs.

**DO NOT USE DEFECTIVE LADDERS!**

**NEVER PAINT WOODEN LADDERS - IT CAN HIDE DEFECTS** (They may be treated with a non-conductive coating such as vanish, shellac or clear preservative).

The top of the ladder should extend at least 1.05m above the platform or other landing place or above the highest rung on which the user has to stand, unless there is a suitable manhold to reduce the risk of over-balancing.

Place the top of the ladder at a suitable angle to minimise the risk of it slipping outwards (ideally at about 75° to the horizontal, ie; 1 m out from the building for every 4m in height). **See Appendix 1 for diagram.**

Rest the ladder against a solid surface, proprietary spreader arms or similar equipment should be used to span windows or other openings.

**A LADDER SHOULD NOT REST AGAINST PLASTIC GUTTERS OR OTHER SUCH SURFACES!** (appropriate equipment such as ladder stays should be used).

**DO NOT SUPPORT LADDERS ON THEIR RUNGS!**

**Lifting Materials and Tools:**

**NEVER TRY TO CATCH HEAVY OR AWKWARD LOADS UP A LADDER!**

**Step-ladders**

Step-ladders and folding trestles are **not** designed for any degree of side loading. Workers have been killed or seriously injured trying to descend from work platforms or landing places using unsecured step-ladders.

**DO NOT USE THE TOP PLATFORM FOR WORK UNLESS IT IS DESIGNED WITH SPECIAL HANDHOLDS, AND AVOID OVER-REACHING. THE STEP-LADDER IS LIABLE TO OVERTURN!**

**NEVER PLACE A LADDER WHERE THERE IS DANGER FROM MOVING VEHICLES, OVERHEAD CRANES OR ELECTRICITY LINES!**