

Working at height

In 2006/07 45 people died from a fall from height at work whilst 3,351 suffered a major injury in the UK. Ladders can be used for low - risk, short duration work. They are not 'banned' though.

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

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

Common cause of falls	Control measures to reduce the risk
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 rungs clean and in good condition Make sure rungs are horizontal Wear non-slip footwear, if necessary clean soles before using ladder Ensure competence to use ladder (training) Be healthy and fit Always keep three points of contact with the ladder
The ladder wobbles/slips	Position ladder on firm, level surface. Check feet of ladder daily. Fasten ladder at top and bottom where possible. Rest ladder on firm flat surface at top
The ladder breaks	Position ladder properly – use the 1 in 4 rule for leaning ladders. Do not exceed the maximum weight limit on the ladder Carry only light materials or tools.

Keeping three points of contact



X Incorrect – overreaching



✓ Correct – three points of contact

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Always refer to manufacturer's guidance when using ladders.

If you are not sure that it is right to use a ladder speak to your line manager, safety representative or Health & Safety Management
Health and Safety guidance on working at height and risk assessment is available on the hub, Or the

HSE website: at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/falls/ladders.htm>