



TOOLBOX TALKS

LADDERS

Falls from ladders are a leading cause of disability and death in many industries. Prior to using any ladder, make sure that it is in good condition and is the right type of ladder for the job. Ensure the ladder is the correct height and style of ladder to allow you to perform your task safely.

Ensure the person setting up the ladder or stepladder has been trained or supervised to work safely.

WORKING SAFELY FROM STEPLADDERS

- Ensure that the stepladder is set up on stable ground, and all the stabilising stays and locking clips or locking arms are engaged securely.
- Have the steps facing the work activity.
- Avoid standing on the top two steps of the stepladder. This makes it unstable and prone to tipping over.
- Avoid side-on loading work (for example, drilling side-on through bricks or concrete).
 - Where side-on loading cannot be avoided, prevent the stepladder from tipping over. By tying the steps to a secure point. If this cannot be done, use access equipment that is more suitable.
- Avoid holding items when climbing and use a tool belt.
- Always face the ladder and use a three-point contact climbing method (two hands and one foot, or one hand and two feet).
- The areas at the top and base of ladders should be clear of tools, equipment, and debris.
- Keep **three points of contact** on the ladder at all times for safety in case you slip. For example, holding on with any of your feet or hands, and including bracing your body (like your knees or chest) against the ladder when you briefly need two hands free.

Only:

- use a ladder if you are physically capable of doing so.
- use A-frame ladders properly locked in the fully open position.

Never

- lean or reach away from the ladder while using it.
- climb or work past the second-last rung of a ladder.
- straddle the top of an A-frame ladder.

WORKING SAFELY FROM LADDERS

- Secure the ladder at the top and bottom to prevent it slipping sideways or outwards – some ladders have stabilising clips.
- If a ladder cannot be secured, have a second person provide footing for added stability.
 - Footing a ladder means having a second person physically hold the base of the ladder while it is in use. This should only be considered, following a risk assessment, if other means of safely securing the ladder cannot be achieved.
- Extension ladders must be positioned so that it is leaning against a vertical surface of support. They must be positioned at an angle of a 4:1 ratio. E.g., for every 4' high, the ladder should be brought 1' out from the vertical surface of support.
- Stop at the third step from the top of a straight ladder as standing higher as you could lose your balance and fall.
- Do not exceed the rated safe working load of the ladder.
- Do not overreach – keep the centre of your torso within the stiles and both feet on the same rung while working.
- Carry tools on a tool belt. Do not rest tools or other items on the steps or hang them from the rungs.
- The areas at the top and base of ladders should be clear of tools, equipment, and debris.
- Ladders should be of industrial rating (minimum 120kg) and meet, or exceed, the requirements of the relevant AS/NZS 1892 Portable ladders standard.
- Keep three points of contact on the ladder at all times for safety in case you slip. For example, holding on with any of your feet or hands, and including bracing your body (like your knees or chest) against the ladder when you briefly need two hands free.