SMITHS
LANDSCAPES

SMITHS LANDSCAPES LIMITED
WORKING AT HEIGHTS POLICY

WORKING WITH LADDERS, STEP-LADDERS AND STEP-STOOLS

Taken from INDG455 Safe Use of Ladders and Step-ladders
(http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf)

Ladders can be used for low-risk, short duration activities that do not require higher level fall protection. As a guide ladders and step ladders should be used for no more than 30 minutes.

Using ladders

Training is required in the safe use of ladders and users must be deemed competent to be able to use the equipment safely.

Pre-Use Checks

A pre-use check of ladders should be carried out:

- By the user at the beginning of the working day
- After something has changed e.g. if the ladder has been dropped or damaged, moved from a dirty to a clean area etc.

Items to check

- The Stiles – ensure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle or collapse
- The Feet – if they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder could slip. Also check the
- ladder feet if moving from soft/dirty ground to smooth, solid surfaces to make sure that there is nothing embedded to prevent the feet from making contact with the ground
- The Rungs – if they are bent, worn, missing or loose the ladder could fall
- Any Locking Mechanisms – if they are bent of the fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse. Ensure that any locking bars are engaged.
- Stepladder platform – if it is split of buckled the ladder could become unstable or collapse
- Steps or treads on stepladders – if they are contaminated they could be slippery, if the fixings are loose on steps, they could collapse
- Record the outcomes of any pre-use checks in the ladder booking out ledger.

Using ladders safely

Simple precautions to minimise the risk of a fall:

Leaning Ladders

- Only carry light materials
- Don’t overreach

- Make sure the ladder is long enough or high enough for the task
- Don't overload the ladder, check the pictogram or information on the ladder
- Make sure the ladder is at 75°
- Always grip ladders and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending
- Don't move or extend ladders while standing on the rungs
- Don't work off the top three rungs and make sure the ladder extends at least 1m above where you are working
- Avoid holding items when climbing
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing (one hand and two feet)

Stepladders

- Check all four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level
- Only carry light materials and tools
- Don't overreach
- Don't stand or work on the top three steps
- Ensure any locking devices are engaged
- Try and position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on
- Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading
- Maintain three points of contact at the working position (two feet and one hand)

Working with Mobile Scaffolds

Taken from HSE (http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/scaffold.htm [4])

Towers should be erected by trained and competent people. There are a number of organisations that provide training for the safe erection and use of tower scaffolds.

The incidents that occur are mainly caused by:

- Dangerous methods of erection or dismantling – where a safe system is not being followed;
- Defects in the erected scaffold – where the tower structure is incorrectly assembled or where a platform guardrail is missing;
- Misuse of the scaffold – where a ladder is used on a tower causing it to overturn or when a person falls while the tower is being moved.

Erection and dismantling

The manufacturer, supplier or hirer has a duty to provide an instruction manual explaining the erection sequence, including any bracing requirements.

Towers should be erected following a safe method of work, either using:

- Advance guard rail system – where temporary guard rail units are locked in place from the level below and moved up to the platform level. They are in place before the operator accesses the platform to fit the permanent guard rails.
- 'Through-the-trap' (3T) – involves the operator taking up a working position in the trap door of

the platform, from where they can add or remove the components which act as the guard rails on the level above the platform. It is designed to ensure that the operator does not stand on an unguarded platform.

Stability

To maintain tower stability you must make sure:

- The tower is resting on firm, level ground with the locked castors or base plates properly supported. Never use bricks or building blocks to take the weight of any part of the tower; stabilisers or outriggers are installed when required by the instruction manual; and
- That a tower is never erected to a height above that recommended by the manufacturer.

Precautions and inspection

Tower scaffolds must comply with the standard of required for all types of scaffolds, e.g. double guardrails, toeboards, bracing and access ladder. When the tower is purchased or hired it should arrive with all the necessary components to prevent falls and ensure stability.

Towers rely on all parts being in place to ensure adequate strength. They can collapse if sections are left out. All towers must be inspected following assembly and then at suitable regular intervals by a competent person. In addition, if the tower is used for construction work and a person could fall 2 metres or more from the working platform, then it must be inspected following assembly and then every 7 days. Stop work if the inspection shows it is not safe to continue and put right any faults. The result of an inspection should be recorded and kept until the next inspection is recorded.

Using and moving

Make sure everyone involved is aware of, and follows, these simple rules:

Using

Never use a tower:

- In strong winds;
- As a support for ladders, trestles or other access equipment;
- With broken or missing parts; or
- With incompatible components.

Moving

When moving a tower you should always:

- Reduce the height to a maximum of 4m;
- Check that there are no power lines or other obstructions overhead;
- Check that the ground is firm, level and free from potholes; and
- Push or pull using manual effort from the base only.

Never move a tower while people or materials are on the tower, or in windy conditions.

Further information can be found Work at height, Access equipment, Information, Tool (WAIT) e-Learning tool (http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/index.htm [5])

RISK ASSESSMENT GUIDANCE

In the event that work at height cannot be avoided, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment MUST be undertaken. The outcomes of this risk assessment must provide the evidence for the development of a safe system of work, which includes the provision of emergency procedures.

If the risks are significant, the assessment and the method statement (safe system of work) must be written down.

Assessing the Risks

When assessing risk, all available information about the work to be undertaken needs to be available and consulted. All foreseeable risks must be considered in advance and the following may need to be considered.

- Working on roofs without adequate fixed protection
- Working on roofs without unprotected roof lights
- Working from a ladder
- Working from a scaffold or scaffold tower

Areas for consideration in the assessment should include:

- The work being undertaken
- Frequency of access
- Duration of the work
- Location in relation to the presence of hazards e.g. overhead services etc.
- The working environment with regard to weather and lighting
- Safe means of access and egress
- Lone working
- Condition and stability of work surfaces such as fragile materials, slippery surfaces etc.
- Physical capabilities of the workers such as pregnancy or vertigo sufferers
- Falling objects
- Impact on adjacent work activities, or passage of staff adjacent to work at height
- Prevention of access by unauthorised persons

The written risk assessment must be completed on the Non-Laboratory Risk Assessment form available on LSHTM intranet (Risk Assessment Form).

Developing a Method Statement

In the development of a written method statement, the information gathered during the risk assessment will be used to develop a document that will give information and instruction to the employee who are carrying out the work. It will also detail, where necessary:

- Collective fall protection
- Personal fall arrest
- Requirements for inspection

- The means of preventing unauthorised access to the area underneath the work being carried out
- Any supervision that may be necessary
- Any weather conditions that workers may be exposed to e.g. ice roofs, slippery surfaces in the rain, wind etc.
- Any emergency or rescue conditions e.g. it is not acceptable just to reply on the emergency services, this needs to be covered in the risk assessment and planned prior to the work being carried out

This Policy has been read, understood and agreed by:

Name:	Jason Smith	
Position:	Owner	
Signature:		
Date:	21.2.22	