

Legislation

- Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Provision & Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992

This list is not exhaustive. There may be others that are applicable.

Useful Web Sites

www.hse.gov.uk

www.devononline.gov.uk

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Ladder Safety

North Devon District Council

Health and Safety

Ladder Safety

This leaflet aims to provide a checklist for employers to ensure that ladders are used safely while working at height.

The use of a ladder while carrying out activities such as window cleaning, maintenance, decoration etc may lead to a person sustaining a serious injury if used incorrectly. Nearly 70 people died and approximately 4,000 people* in a year suffered a serious injury as a result of falling from height.

Local authorities and the Health and Safety Executive are providing advice on this area of work to reduce these figures. The aim of this guidance is to provide advice in the safe use of ladders and to prevent falls from working at height.

Accidents from the use of ladders occur through their misuse such as over reaching, working from unsecured ladders and stepping off a ladder to a window ledge. It may also occur from operative error.

There are a number of legal requirements for a safe working method to be provided in the use of the ladders. Staff should be aware of hazards following training and provision of information on their work activities.

*Data from 2001/02

Checklist for Ladder Safety

Are you working at height?

Examples include cleaning windows, roof work, changing of light bulbs etc.

Can the work be carried out by other methods?

For example, using a cherry picker in a warehouse to change the light bulbs at a particular time as preventative maintenance rather than changing light bulbs when they expire.

How often is access required? Duration of work?

For frequent access consider a permanent safe means of access i.e. stairs, scaffold etc. Ladders should only be used for short periods.

Is the ladder suitable?

A ladder is for access, not a working platform. Is it in good repair, will it carry the weight needed? Are there 3 points of contact for the person using the ladder i.e. both feet and 1 hand on the ladder at any one time.

Are site conditions suitable?

Any other hazards present?

Example - overhead electrical supplies, opening windows, distractions to worker etc.

Are tools carried safely? Will they fall onto people below?

Are there additional risks from working on ladders?

i.e. using a ladder on a stairwell may mean a person could fall more than just the height of the ladder.

Consideration given to weather conditions?

Such as wet, icy or moss as the ladder may slip.

Consider the work environment

i.e. is the ground stable for the ladder? Other hazards present such as traffic or pedestrians that may access equipment?

Prevent access by unauthorised persons.

Manual handling issues:

i.e. carrying of the ladder and tools.

Are staff on their own? Emergency arrangements?

Suitable footwear?

Have staff been trained in the safe use of ladders?

Ten Tips for Good Practice

- Tie the ladder you are working on to a secure point to prevent movement.

- Allow 1 metre of ladder above the highest rung for use and avoid standing on the top three rungs.
- Ladders should not be longer than 9 metres.
- Store ladders to protect them from the weather or harsh environments.
- Ladders and intended use should comply with the British Standard or European Standard.
- Ladders should be numbered individually and recorded mark/type of ladder, rating and first use.
- Regular inspections are recommended and this should be recorded.
- Staff should check ladder/s before use.

This list is not exhaustive and each task should be assessed to determine if any other precautions are required.