



HSEM BULLETIN

Ladder Safety

Who needs to read this?

All Curtin University Staff, Students and Contractors

Background

There are many different types of ladders including: single/extension/platform, step, portable and fixed. Each type of ladder has specific safety requirements and purpose. Many incidents involving ladders occur, because the ladders have not been used as per manufacturer's specifications.

According to Safe Work Australia, there were 40 fatalities involving ladders from 2003 to 2013. In the last 5 years 3170 workers were injured in falls involving ladders with many resulting from falls of three metres or less or due to the use of makeshift steps or ladders.

Information

Single/Extension ladders should only be used as a means for access to or egress from a work area and should not be used as a working platform. Scaffolding, elevated work platforms or cherry pickers should be utilised when carrying out work at heights. Ladders used at workplaces must be industrial grade and designed and constructed in accordance with AS 1892.

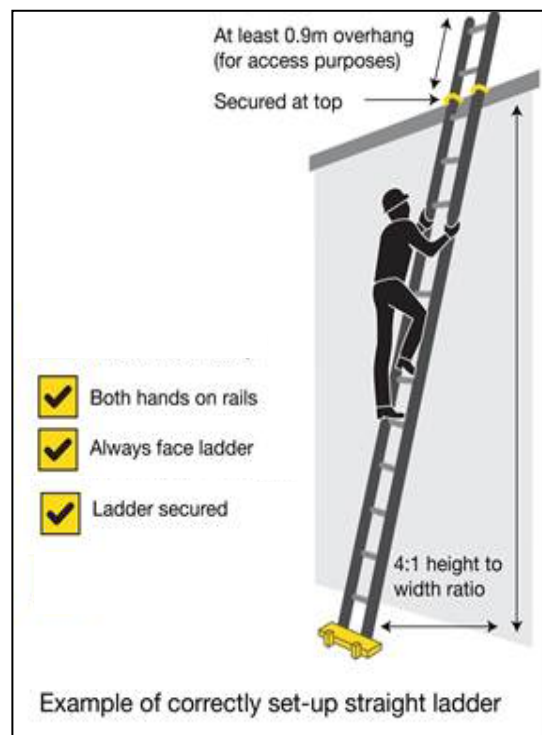
Recommendations

When using a ladder, ensure that:

- you are facing the ladder and have three points of contact at all times when ascending or descending a ladder. Materials shall not be carried while climbing the ladder and tools should be contained in a tool belt or side pouch;
- the distance between the ladder base and the supporting structure has a height to width ratio of 4 to 1;
- it is located on a firm footing and adequately secured in position, so as to prevent slipping or sideways movement. In some circumstances, a second person may be required to 'foot' the ladder for added stability;
- if it is being used to access a platform, the ladder protrudes at least 900mm beyond the platform landing;
- before it is used, the ladder is inspected for faults and damage, such as broken rungs, rails

or footings and that it is fit for purpose;

- other fall prevention equipment is considered prior to the use of ladders. This can be determined by conducting a risk assessment.



Who do we call with questions?

If you have any queries, please contact Health, Safety and Emergency Management on 9266 4900 or email healthandsafety@curtin.edu.au.

References

[Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

[Code of Practice – Prevention of Falls at Workplaces 2004](#)

[Safe Work Australia - Work-related injuries and fatalities in construction, Australia, 2003 to 2013. June 2015](#)

Date of Issue
[09/09/2016]