# Ladder safety toolbox talk

Work at height · about 5 minutes · read it out, or say it in your own words

| SITE OR JOB | DATE | PRESENTER |
|---|---|---|
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Ladders are cheap and always close by, so they get used for jobs they were never meant for and in a condition they should never be in. On small sites, falls from ladders often come down to a damaged ladder, soft or uneven ground, a ladder that was not tied or held, or someone stretching too far instead of moving it.

## SAY THIS

### Is a ladder the right tool?

A ladder is for getting up and down, and for short, light jobs where you can keep a good hold. If the job takes a long time, needs both hands or means carrying heavy material, ask for a mobile scaffold or a proper platform instead. Using the wrong equipment because it is quicker is how people get hurt.

### Check it before you climb

Look at the whole ladder every time. Are the side rails, called stiles, straight and without cracks? Are any rungs missing, bent or loose? Are the rubber feet still there? The law says a ladder with damaged stiles, or damaged or missing rungs, may not be used, and neither may one with rungs held on only by nails or screws. Wooden ladders should not be painted, because paint can hide cracks. If a ladder is damaged, mark it do not use, put it aside and tell the foreman. Never fix it with wire or nails.

### Set it up properly

Stand the ladder on firm, level ground, never on bricks, a drum or loose sand. Rest the top against something solid, not a gutter or a window. Tie the top or have someone hold the bottom, and make sure the ladder sticks out above the landing so you have something to hold when you step off. The law says a leaning ladder may not be longer than 9 metres. Never tie or join two ladders together to reach higher.

### Climbing and working

Face the ladder and hold on with both hands while you climb. Carry tools in a pouch or pull them up on a rope afterwards. Only one person on a ladder at a time. Keep your body between the stiles and do not stand on the top rungs. If you cannot reach, come down and move the ladder. Scrape mud off your boots first.

### Stepladders

Open a stepladder fully and lock the spreaders before you climb. Never lean a folded stepladder against a wall and climb it like a straight ladder.

### Above and below you

Look up for overhead power lines before you carry or stand a ladder, especially a metal one, because metal conducts electricity. Below you, barricade the foot of the ladder if it stands in a doorway or walkway, and keep tools from falling on the people underneath.

## CHECK ON SITE TODAY

- ☐ Inspect every ladder on site: stiles, rungs and non-slip feet
- ☐ Are damaged ladders tagged do not use and taken out of use?
- ☐ Are ladders in use standing on firm, level ground and tied or held?
- ☐ Do ladders used for access stick out above the landing?
- ☐ Are there overhead power lines near where ladders are used today?
- ☐ Is there a tool pouch or a way to pull tools up?

## ASK THE CREW

- ? Which jobs this week should be done from a scaffold instead of a ladder?
- ? What do you look for before you climb a ladder?
- ? Where on this site would you tie off a ladder?
- ? What would you do if you found a broken ladder here?

## PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR THIS JOB

Safety boots with clean, grippy soles · Hard hat · Tool pouch or tool belt

## THE LAW

General Safety Regulations, 1986, regulation 13A: Ladders; Construction Regulations, 2014, regulation 10: Fall protection. What each one says, in plain words, with links: sitediary.co.za/toolbox-talks/ladders/

# Toolbox talk attendance register

TOPIC

Ladders

DATE

SITE OR JOB

TIME

PRESENTER

COMPANY

PRESENTER SIGNATURE

By signing, I confirm that I attended this toolbox talk, that it was given in a language I understand, and that I could ask questions.

| NO. | NAME AND SURNAME | COMPANY OR TRADE | SIGNATURE |
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Keep this register in the site health and safety file. Log the talk in today's site diary with a photo of this page.