

Health and Safety Code of Practice

SCP38 Working at Height

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| Responsibility for Policy: | Deputy Chief Executive, Organisational Enhancement |
| Relevant to: | University staff, students and contractors |
| Approved by: | University Health and Safety Committee |
| Responsibility for Document Review: | Head of Safety, Health and Environment |
| Date introduced: | February 2007 |
| Date(s) modified: | June 2012, January 2014, November 2015, December 2016, December 2018 |
| Next Review Date: | December 2020 |

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations 1996
- BS 8437: 2005 Code of Practice for Selecting, Use and Maintenance of Personal Fall Protection Systems and Equipment for use in the Workplace
- BS 2037: 1994 Specification for portable aluminium ladders, stepladders, tressles and lightweight staging
- BS 1129: 1990 Specification for portable timber ladders, stepladders, tressles and lightweight staging
- EN131: Ladders: terms, types, functional sizes
- Work at Height Access Equipment Toolkit (Health and Safety Executive)
- INDG455 Safe use of ladders and stepladders: a brief guide (Health and Safety Executive)
- INDG401 Working at height safely: a brief guide (Health and Safety Executive)

RELATED POLICIES & DOCUMENTS

- Liverpool John Moores University Health and Safety Policy Statement
- MCP1 Organisation for the Implementation of the Health and Safety Policy
- MCP2 Arrangements for the Implementation of the Health and Safety Policy
- SCP44 Approved Scaffolding Contractors

**THIS CODE OF PRACTICE FORMS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY'S HEALTH AND SAFETY
POLICY AND REPLACES ALL PREVIOUS ISSUES**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice summarises what the University needs to do to comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

These Regulations have been made to prevent deaths and injuries, caused by falls at work.

1.1 What is 'work at height'?

A place is 'at height' if (unless these Regulations are followed) a person could be injured falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level.

'Work' includes moving around at a place of work (except by a staircase in a permanent workplace) but not travel to or from a place of work. For instance, a librarian on a stepladder would be working at height, but not an employee driving a tractor.

1.2 Detailed requirements of the Regulations

The Regulations contain detailed requirements for the following items:

- Existing places of work and means of access for work at height
- Collective fall prevention (e.g. guard rails and toe boards)
- Working platforms
- Collective fall arrest (e.g. nets, airbags etc.)
- Personal fall protection (e.g. work restraints, work positioning, fall arrest and rope access)
- Ladders and step ladders
- Inspection reports (for working platforms in construction only)

Before considering undertaking or requesting any work at height, it is strongly recommended that staff make themselves familiar with what is required. These requirements are included as Appendix 1.

2. APPLICATION OF THE WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS 2005

The Work at Height Regulations 2005 apply to all work at height, where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause personal injury. They place duties on employers, the self-employed, and any person who controls the work of others (e.g. facilities managers or building owners who may contract others to work at height) to the extent they control the work.

The Regulations do not apply to the provision of paid instruction or leadership in caving or climbing by way of sport, recreation, team building or similar activities.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

Staff (working under someone else's control) and students must:

- Report any safety hazard to their supervisors
- Use the equipment supplied (including safety devices) properly, following any training and instructions (unless they think that would be unsafe, in which case they should seek further instructions before continuing)

4. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The overriding principle is to do all that is reasonably practicable to prevent anyone falling. The responsibility is delegated to those giving instructions to others, where the instructions involve persons working at height.

4.1 Hierarchy of control measures

There is a simple hierarchy for managing and selecting equipment for work at height:

1. Avoid work at height where possible
2. Use work equipment or other measures to prevent falls where working at height cannot be avoided
3. Where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated, use work equipment or other measures to minimise the distance and consequences of a fall, should one occur.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF SUPERVISING OR PLANNING WORK AT HEIGHT

Staff supervising or planning work at height will ensure that:

- All work at height is properly planned and organised
- All work at height takes account of weather conditions that could endanger health and safety
- Those involved in work at height are trained and competent
- The place where work at height is done is safe
- Equipment for work at height is appropriately inspected
- The risks from fragile surfaces are properly controlled; and
- The risks from falling objects are properly controlled

Each of the above responsibilities is explained in more detail below.

5.1 Planning and organising

Staff who supervise or plan work at height must:

- Ensure that no work is done at height if it is safe and reasonably practicable to do it other than at height
- Ensure that the work is properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable
- Plan for emergencies and rescue
- Take account of the **risk assessment** that should have been carried out

5.2 Weather

Staff who supervise or plan work at height must ensure that the work is postponed while weather conditions endanger health or safety.

5.3 Staff training

Staff who supervise or plan work at height must ensure that everyone involved in the work is competent (or, if being trained, is supervised by a competent person). This includes involvement in organisation, planning, supervision and the supply and maintenance of equipment.

Where other precautions do not entirely eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so, those who will be working at height must be trained how to avoid falling and how to avoid or minimise injury to themselves should they fall.

Mobile scaffold tower training is arranged by the Safety, Health and Environment Department.

5.4 The place where work is done

Staff who supervise or plan work at height must ensure that the place where work is done at height (including the means of access) is safe and has features to prevent a fall, unless this would mean that it is not reasonably practicable for the person to carry out the work safely (taking into account the demands of the task, equipment and working environment). Detailed safety requirements about where work is done at height are set out in Appendix 1.

5.5 Equipment, temporary structures and safety features

Staff who supervise or plan work at height must provide equipment for preventing (as far as is reasonably practicable) a fall occurring if the place where work is done does not have features to prevent a fall.

If the precautions mentioned in 5.4 and 5.5 do not entirely eliminate the risk of a fall occurring, all that is reasonably practicable must be done to minimise the distance and effect of a fall.

When selecting equipment for work at height:

- The most suitable equipment must be used
- Collective protection measures (e.g. guard rails) must be given priority over personal protection measures (e.g. safety harnesses)
- The working conditions must be taken into account
- Risks to the safety of all those at the place where the work equipment is to be used must be taken into account

All equipment, temporary structures (e.g. scaffolding) and safety features must comply with the detailed requirements contained in Appendix 1, items 2 – 6.

5.6 Inspections

'Inspection' is defined as 'such visual or more rigorous inspection by a competent person as is appropriate for safety purposes... (including) any testing appropriate for those purposes.'

(As far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) each individual place at which work is to be done at height must be checked on every occasion by staff that supervise or plan work at height before that place is used. This involves checking the surface on every parapet, permanent rail etc.

Any item of a type mentioned in Appendix 1, items 2 - 6 must be inspected:

- After it is assembled or installed, or after it has been assembled and installed if both are required, if its safety depends on how it is assembled or installed
- As often as is necessary to ensure safety and in particular to make sure that any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time

Before any such equipment is used, which has come from another business, and before any equipment leaves the School/Department where it was used, a check must be made to ensure that an indication (clear to everyone involved) is provided to show that the last inspection required by these Regulations has been carried out.

Note: This does not apply to lifting equipment governed by the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations 1998, but since that rule is similar to this one there is little practical difference.

Any platform used for (or for access to) construction work and from which a person could fall more than 2 metres must be inspected in place before use (and not more than seven days before use). Where it is a mobile platform, inspection at the site is sufficient without re-inspection every time it is moved.

Note: 'Construction work' broadly means 'the carrying out of any building, civil engineering or engineering construction work'. 'Platform' includes areas like gangways and stairways.

The person inspecting a platform must:

- Prepare a report before going off duty, giving the details listed in Appendix 1, item 7
- Give the report (or a copy) within 24 hours of completing the inspection to the person for whom the inspection was done

The report of a platform inspection must be kept:

- At the construction site until the work is completed
- Then at the University for another three months

'Keeping' a report means keeping it (or a copy) safe from loss and unauthorised interference and so that a printed copy can be supplied when required.

All other records of inspection must be kept until the next inspection has been carried out.

These requirements do not apply to lifting equipment governed by the similar rules imposed by the Lifting Equipment and Lifting Operations Regulations 1998.

5.7 Fragile surfaces

No one must go onto or near a fragile surface, unless that is the only reasonably practicable way to carry out the work safely, having regard to the demands of the task, equipment or working environment.

If anyone does work on or near a fragile surface, staff that supervise or plan work at height must:

- Ensure (as far as it is reasonably practicable to do so) that suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails and the like are provided (and used) to minimise the risk
- Do all that is reasonably practicable, if any risk of a fall remains, to minimise the distance and effect of a fall

If anyone does go onto or near a fragile surface, all reasonably practicable measures must be taken to make them aware of the danger, preferably by using prominent warning notices fixed at the approaches to the danger zone.

5.8 Falling objects

Where it is necessary to prevent injury, all that is reasonably practicable must be done to prevent anything falling.

If it is not reasonably practicable, measures must be taken to ensure that no one is injured by anything falling. Nothing must be:

- Thrown or tipped from height if it is likely to injure anyone
- Stored in such a way that its movement is likely to injure anyone

If the workplace contains an area in which there is a risk of someone being struck by a falling object or person, the area must be clearly indicated and (as far as reasonably practicable) unauthorised people must not be able to reach it.

APPENDIX 1

DETAILED REQUIREMENTS OF THE WORK AT HEIGHT REGULATIONS 2005

1. REQUIREMENTS FOR EXISTING PLACES OF WORK AND MEANS OF ACCESS OR EGRESS AT HEIGHT

Every existing place of work or means of access or egress at height shall:

- a) Be stable and sufficiently strong and rigid for the purpose for which it is intended to be, or is being, used
- b) Where applicable, rest on a stable, sufficiently strong surface
- c) Be large enough to permit the safe passage of persons, the safe use of any plant or materials required to be used and to provide a safe working area having regard to the work to be carried out there
- d) Have suitable and sufficient means for preventing a fall
- e) Have a surface that has no gap:
 - through which a person could fall
 - through which any material or object could fall and injure a person
 - which could cause risk of injury to any person, unless measures have been taken to protect persons against such risk
- f) Be constructed, used and maintained in such condition as to prevent, so far as reasonably practicable:
 - the risk of slipping or tripping; or
 - any person being caught between it and any adjacent structure
- g) Where it has moving parts, be prevented by appropriate devices from moving inadvertently during work at height

2. REQUIREMENTS FOR GUARD-RAILS, TOE-BOARDS, BARRIERS AND SIMILAR COLLECTIVE MEANS OF PROTECTION

Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference here to means of protection is to guard-rail, toe-board, barrier or similar collective means of protection.

Means of protection shall:

- a) Be large enough, strong enough and rigid enough for the purposes for which they are being used and be otherwise suitable
- b) Be placed, secured and used to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they do not become accidentally displaced; and
- c) Be placed to prevent, so far as is practicable, a person or any material or object falling from any place of work.

In relation to work at height involved in construction work:

- a) The top guard-rail or other similar means of protection shall be at least 950 millimetres or, in the case of such means of protection already existing before the Regulations came into force, at least 910 millimetres above the edge from which any person might fall;

- b) Toe-boards shall be suitable and sufficient to prevent any person, material or object falling from any place of work; and
- c) Any intermediate guard-rail or similar means of protection shall be positioned so that any gap between it and other means of protection does not exceed 470 millimetres.

Any structure or part of a structure supporting means of protection, or to which means of protection are attached, shall be strong enough and suitable for the purpose of support or attachment.

There shall not be a lateral opening in the means of protection except the point of access to a ladder or stairway where a temporary opening is necessary, as per the paragraph below.

Means of protection shall be removed only for the time and to the extent necessary to gain access or egress or for the performance of a particular task and shall be replaced as soon as practicable.

The task shall not be performed while means of protection are removed unless effective compensatory safety measures are in place.

3. REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL WORKING PLATFORMS

“Supporting structure” means any structure used for the purpose of supporting a working platform and includes any plant used for that purpose.

3.1 Condition of surfaces

Any surface that a supporting structure rests on shall be stable, strong enough and of a suitable composition to safely support the supporting structure, the working platform and any loading intended to be placed on it.

3.2 Stability of supporting structure

Any supporting structure shall:

- a) Be suitable, strong and rigid enough for the purpose for which it is being used
- b) In the case of a wheeled structure, be prevented by appropriate devices from moving inadvertently during work at height
- c) Be prevented from slipping by secure attachment to the bearing surface or to another structure, provision of an effective anti-slip device or by other effective means of equivalent effectiveness
- d) Be stable while being erected, used and dismantled; and remain so when being altered or modified

3.3 Stability of working platforms

A working platform shall:

- a) Be suitable, sufficiently strong and rigid for the purposes for which it is intended to be used or is being used
- b) Be erected and used to ensure that its components do not become accidentally displaced so as to endanger any person;
- c) Be altered or modified only in a way that ensures it remains stable
- d) Be dismantled in such a way as to prevent accidental displacement.

3.4 Safety on working platforms

A working platform shall:

- a) Be large enough to permit the safe passage of persons and the safe use of any plant or materials required to be used and to provide a safe working area having regard to the work being carried out there
- b) Possess a suitable surface and, in particular, be constructed so that its surface has no gap:
 - through which a person could fall
 - through which any material or object could fall and injure a person; or
 - giving rise to other risk of injury to any person, unless measures have been taken to protect persons against such risk; and
- c) Be erected, used and maintained in such condition as to prevent, so far as is reasonably practicable:
 - the risk of slipping or tripping; or
 - any person being caught between the working platform and any adjacent structure.

3.5 Loading

A working platform and any supporting structure shall not be loaded in a way that risks collapse or deformation that could affect its safe use.

4. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SCAFFOLDING

Strength and stability calculations for scaffolding shall be carried out unless:

- a) A note of the calculations, covering the structural arrangements contemplated, is available; or
- b) It is assembled in conformity with a generally recognised standard configuration

Depending on the complexity of the scaffolding selected, an assembly, use and dismantling plan shall be drawn up by a competent person. This may be in the form of a standard plan, supplemented by items relating to specific details of the scaffolding in question.

A copy of the plan, including any instructions it may contain, shall be kept available for the use of persons concerned in the assembly, use, dismantling or alteration of scaffolding until it has been dismantled.

The dimensions, form and layout of scaffolding decks shall be appropriate to the nature of the work to be performed, suitable for the loads to be carried and shall permit work and passage in safety.

While a scaffold is not available for use, including during its assembly, dismantling or alteration, it shall be marked with general warning signs in accordance with the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations, 1996 and be suitably delineated by physical means preventing access to the danger zone.

Scaffolding may be assembled, dismantled or significantly altered only under the supervision of a competent person and by persons who have received appropriate and specific training in the operations envisaged which addresses specific risks which the operations may entail and precautions to be taken, and more particularly in:

- a) Understanding of the plan for the assembly, dismantling or alteration of the scaffolding concerned
- b) Safety during the assembly, dismantling or alteration of the scaffolding concerned
- c) Measures to prevent the risk of persons, materials or objects falling
- d) Safety measures in the event of changing weather conditions that could adversely affect the safety of the scaffolding concerned
- e) Permissible loadings

Please refer to SCP44 Approved Scaffolding Contractors. This Code of Practice provides a guide to the requirements and operating procedures for the procurement and use of scaffold equipment within Liverpool John Moores University.

Its principal objective is to establish clear and unambiguous duties and responsibilities upon the parties involved in the procurement and use of scaffold equipment in order to minimise the inherent risks associated with the use of such equipment.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR COLLECTIVE SAFEGUARDS FOR ARRESTING FALLS

Any reference to a safeguard here is to a collective safeguard for arresting falls.

A safeguard shall be used only if:

- a) A risk assessment has demonstrated that the work activity can, so far as it is reasonably practicable, be performed safely while using it and without affecting its effectiveness
- b) The use of other, safer work equipment is not reasonably practicable; and
- c) A sufficient number of available persons have received adequate training specific to the safeguard, including rescue procedures

A safeguard shall be suitable and strong enough to arrest safely the fall of any person who is liable to fall.

A safeguard shall:

- a) In the case of one which is designed to be attached, be securely attached to all required anchors and the anchors and their means of attachment shall be suitably strong and stable enough for the purpose of safely supporting the foreseeable loading in arresting any fall and during any subsequent rescue
- b) In the case of an airbag, landing mat or similar safeguard, be stable; and
- c) In the case of a safeguard that distorts in arresting a fall, afford sufficient clearance

Suitable and sufficient steps shall be taken to ensure, so far as practicable, that in the event of a fall by any person the safeguard does not itself cause injury to that person.

6. REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL PERSONAL FALL PROTECTION SYSTEMS

A personal fall protection system shall be used only if:

- a) A risk assessment has demonstrated that:
 - the work can so far as is reasonably practicable be performed safely while using that system; and

- the use of other, safer work equipment is not reasonably practicable; and
- b) The user and a sufficient number of available persons have received adequate training specific to the operations envisaged, including rescue procedures

A personal fall protection system shall:

- a) Be suitable and strong enough for the purposes for which it is being used, having regard to the work being carried out, and any foreseeable loading
- b) Where necessary, fit the user
- c) Be correctly fitted
- d) Be designed to minimise injury to the user and, where necessary, be adjusted to prevent the user falling or slipping from it, should a fall occur; and
- e) Be so designed, installed and used as to prevent unplanned or uncontrolled movement of the user

A personal fall protection system designed for use with an anchor shall be securely attached to at least one anchor, and each anchor and its means of attachment shall be suitable, strong and stable enough for the purpose of supporting any foreseeable loading.

Suitable and sufficient steps shall be taken to prevent any person falling or slipping from a personal fall protection system.

7. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK POSITIONING SYSTEMS

A work positioning system shall be used only if either:

- a) The system includes a suitable backup system for preventing or arresting a fall; and
- b) Where the system includes a line as a backup, the user is connected to it; or
- c) Where it is not reasonably practicable to have a backup system, all practicable measures are taken to ensure that the work positioning system does not fail.

8. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ROPE ACCESS AND POSITIONING TECHNIQUES

A rope access or positioning technique shall be used only if:

- a) It involves a system comprising at least two separately anchored lines, of which one ("the working line") is used as a means of access, egress and support and the other is the safety line (but see * below)
- b) The user is provided with a suitable harness and is connected by it to the working line and the safety line;
- c) The working line is equipped with safe means of ascent and descent and has a self-locking system to prevent the user falling should he/she lose control of his/her movements; and
- d) The safety line is equipped with a mobile fall protection system that is connected to and travels with the user of the system.

Taking the risk assessment into account and depending in particular on the duration of the job and the ergonomic constraints, provision must be made for a seat with appropriate accessories.

* The system may comprise a single rope where:

- a) A risk assessment has demonstrated that the use of a second line would entail higher risk to persons; and
- b) Appropriate measures have been taken to ensure safety

9. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR FALL ARREST SYSTEMS

A fall arrest system shall incorporate a suitable means of absorbing energy and limiting the forces applied to the user's body. A fall arrest system shall not be used in a manner:

- a) Which involves the risk of a line being cut
- b) Where its safe use requires a clear zone (allowing for any pendulum effect), which does not afford such zone; or
- c) Which otherwise inhibits its performance or renders its use unsafe.

10. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR WORK RESTRAINT SYSTEMS

A work restraint system shall:

- a) Be designed, if used correctly, to prevent the user from getting into a position in which a fall can occur; and
- b) Be used correctly

11. REQUIREMENTS FOR LADDERS

Ladders can be used for work at height only if a **risk assessment** has demonstrated that the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the low risk and:

- a) The short duration of use; or
- b) Existing features on site that cannot be altered

Any surface upon which a ladder rests shall be stable, firm, strong enough and of suitable composition to safely support the ladder so that its rungs or steps remain horizontal, with any loading intended to be placed on it.

A ladder shall be positioned to ensure its stability during use.

A suspended ladder shall be attached securely and so that, with the exception of a flexible ladder, it cannot be displaced and swinging is prevented.

A portable ladder shall be prevented from slipping during use by:

- a) Securing the stiles at or near their upper or lower ends
- b) An effective anti-slip or other effective stability device; or
- c) Any other equally effective arrangement

A ladder used for access shall be long enough to protrude sufficiently above the place of landing to which it provides access, unless other measures have been taken to ensure a firm handhold.

No interlocking or extension ladder shall be used unless its sections are prevented from moving relative to each other while in use.

A mobile ladder shall be prevented from moving before it is stepped on.

Where a ladder or run of ladders rises a vertical distance of 9 metres or more above its base there shall, where reasonably practicable, be provided at suitable intervals sufficient safe landing areas or rest platforms.

Every ladder shall be used in such a way that:

- a) A secure handhold and secure support are always available to the user; and
- b) The user can maintain a safe handhold when carrying a load unless, in the case of a stepladder, the maintenance of a handhold is not practicable when a load is carried and a risk assessment has demonstrated that the use of a stepladder is justified because of:
 - the low risk; and
 - the short duration of use

Please refer to Appendix 2 and to INDG 455 Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders – a Brief Guide.

12. PARTICULARS TO BE INCLUDED IN A REPORT OF INSPECTION

1. The name and address of the person for whom the inspection was carried out.
2. The location of the work equipment inspected.
3. A description of the work equipment inspected.
4. The date and time of the inspection.
5. Details of any matter identified that could give rise to a risk to the health and safety of any person.
6. Details of any action taken as a result of any matter identified in paragraph 5.
7. Details of any further action considered necessary.
8. The name and position of the person making the report.

APPENDIX 2

USING LADDERS AND STEPLADDERS SAFELY

On average 13 people a year die at work falling from ladders and nearly 1200 suffer major injuries. More than a quarter of falls happen from ladders.

The key message, therefore, is that ladders should only be used for low-risk, short-duration work.

When can ladders be used?

Ladders can be used if after assessing the risks the use of more suitable work equipment is not justified because of the **low risk and short duration**.

Short duration is taken to be between 15 and 30 minutes depending upon the task. Ladders can also be used for low risk work where there are site features that mean a ladder must be used.

Common causes of falls

| Common causes of falls include those where: | You can help prevent this type of fall if you: |
|---|--|
| The user over-reaches | Keep your body centred within the ladder |
| | Always keep three points of contact with the ladder |
| The user slips from the ladder | Keep the rungs clean and in good condition |
| | Wear non-slip footwear, if necessary clean the soles before using the ladder |
| | Are fit to work at height |
| | Are trained to use a ladder |
| | Keep three points of contact with the ladder |
| The ladder wobbles, slips and falls | Make sure the rungs are horizontal |
| | Position the ladder correctly on a firm, level surface |
| | Check the feet of the ladder daily |
| | Fasten the ladder at top and bottom |
| The ladder breaks | Rest the ladder on a firm surface at the top |
| | Position the ladder properly, use the 1 in 4 rule for leaning ladders |
| | Do not exceed the maximum weight limit on the ladder |
| | Only carry light materials or tools (up to 10kg) |

Is a ladder right for the job? Ladders are classified for type of use. EN131 is for trade and light industrial use; BS2037/BS1129 Class 1 is for heavy duty and industrial use. Use of ladders at the University is restricted to these. Ladders for domestic use must not be used. See the HSE's work at Height at Height Access Equipment Information Toolkit: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/wait/wait-tool.htm>

If you are not sure that it is right to use a ladder please contact the Safety, Health and Environment Department.

The Health and Safety Executive has provided excellent guidance in INDG455: Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders: a Brief Guide.

It provides guidance on the simple, sensible precautions that must be taken to keep people safe when using ladders and stepladders.

Guidance is provided on the following:

- When is a ladder the most suitable equipment?
- Who can use a ladder at work?
- Checking ladders before use
- Using ladders safely
- Stepladders
- Where ladders can be used
- Options for securing ladders
- Condition of the equipment

INDG455 may be found here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.htm>