

Safety Alert

A-FRAME & STEP LADDERS

Issue Date: 14 February 2018

Context:

Ladders have been commonly used to provide convenient access to a higher or lower levels and to perform light duty tasks at height. Each year, many serious injuries result from falls from ladders. Over-reaching, trying to carry out heavy tasks or simply not setting the ladder up securely are among some of the common causes of falls.

The OHS Regulations place ladders in the lowest level of control of falls risks. While ladders are not prohibited by the Regulations, the Regulations do state that if an employer chooses a fixed or portable ladder to control risks associated with a fall, the employer must ensure that the ladder is appropriate for the task to be undertaken and is appropriate for the duration of the task and that it is set up in a correct manner.

Hazards:

- Ladder not the correct height to avoid reaching or stretching
- Standing above the third rung from the top
- Three points of contact not maintained
- Over reaching
- Using defect or damaged ladders
- Ladder not appropriate for the task – using light-duty ladders
- Using metal ladder when working with electricity
- Tools and equipment falling on other workers
- used on a scaffolding, to get extra height
- used on an Elevating Work Platforms to get extra height
- Using ladder in traffic areas, pedestrians or vehicles
- Ladder not positioned on firm, level ground
- An ladder that DOES NOT comply with the relevant part of AS/NZS 1892 series – Portable Ladders
- The ladder is not rated for 120kg or more

Action Required:

The following principles must be followed when using step ladders:

- A- Frame ladders must be an industrial ladder complying with Australian Standard AS/NZS 1892
- Ladder Markings must be per AS/NZS 1892 series – ie labelled as rated for 120kg or more
- Step ladders must be tall enough to ensure a person's feet are not positioned any higher than the third highest tread, don't overreach
- All four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level
- Step ladders must only be used in their fully-open position ensure any locking devices are engaged
- Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on
- Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (eg bricks or concrete)
- Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment
- Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder
- Stepladders must not be used to support planks or any type of temporary work platform
- Ladder are to be fit for the task eg use of fibre glass ladder for electrical work
- Ladder is free from defects or damage before use, don't used if damaged
- Establish an exclusion zone beneath the area where overhead work is to be undertaken
- Ladders must never be used on a scaffold or EWP to gain height
- When working on any ladder above 2m the working at height process applies

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Ladder Markings AS/NZS 1892 series

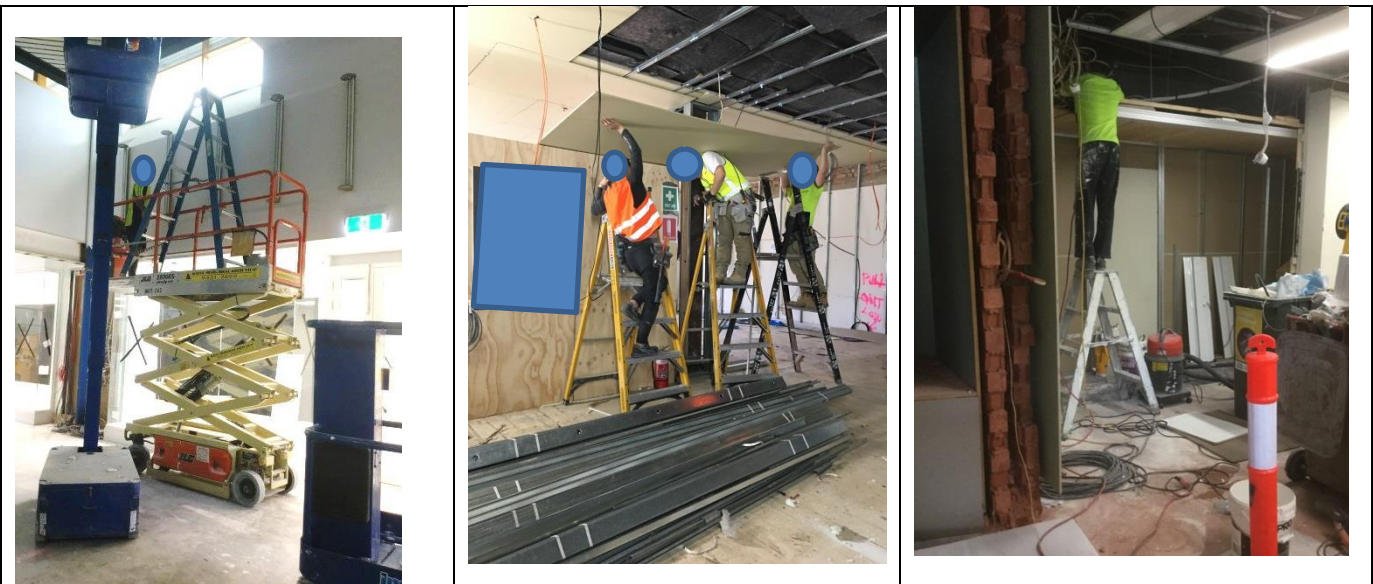
All ladders shall have the following information permanently marked in a prominent position:

- The name of the Australian manufacturer or importer (whether the ladder has been made for sale or otherwise)
- In the largest lettering practicable, the duty rating (i.e. 'INDUSTRIAL' or 'DOMESTIC' as appropriate), the words 'This ladder is intended to carry a maximum load of' and the load rating in kilograms
- The working length of the ladder (the closed and maximum working lengths for extension type ladders)
- On double-sided stepladders, the words 'TO BE USED IN THE FULLY OPEN POSITION ONLY'
- A warning against standing on those treads or rungs which would represent an unsafe working position
- Such markings shall warn against standing any higher than the third top rung on a single or extension ladder and on stepladders, not being a platform stepladder, the second top tread. Labels used to illustrate such marking shall comply with the requirements of Appendix B of AS/NZS 1892, be located to guard against wear, abrasion and disfiguring and be attached by a method which does not affect the strength of the members to which they are attached
- For Metal Ladders - In the largest lettering practicable, the words 'DO NOT USE WHERE ELECTRICAL HAZARD EXISTS'

Maintain three points of contact

Overreaching may cause the user to lose the three point contact which is required.

- ✓ Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means keeping your belt buckle (navel) inside the stiles, two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder



THESE PRACTICES ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE IN OUR WORKPLACE

Further Information:

- ✓ AS/NZS AS/NZS 1892 Portable Ladders
- ✓ WorkSafe – Prevention of Fall – Ladders
- ✓ WorkSafe – Prevent of Falls in General Construction