

HOW TO...SELECT THE RIGHT LADDER GUIDANCE FOR MANAGERS

How to use this guidance

This additional guidance has been created for Managers, Supervisors, Safety Leads or any person responsible for delivering the Toolbox Talks on site. It is designed to be used alongside the Toolbox Talk and offers additional, more specific information to help you add value to the topic covered. **The Ladder Association Code of Practice serves as a supporting document for users, supervisors and managers who have completed a Ladder Association course, and is not intended to be a substitute for training.**

What is the risk?

Ladders are often the 'go-to' piece of equipment as they are readily available on site. But this availability doesn't mean they are suitable for every task. It is often assumed they are so simple to use, what can go wrong? Ladders *can* be simple for those with the right knowledge - users must understand how to select the right ladder for the task to stay safe and prevent accidents.

What type of ladder should you choose?

- Leaning Ladders - should be Certified to EN 131 Parts 1, 2 and 3. Available as single and multi-section ladders, and two and three section extension ladders.
- Stepladders - should be Certified to EN 131 Parts 1, 2 and 3. Available with or without platforms (without a platform are often referred to as 'builder's steps' or 'swingback steps').
- Step Stools - should be Certified to EN 14183. They are a type of stepladder. Max height 1m and generally have larger treads than stepladders.
- Combination Ladders - should be Certified to EN 131 Parts 1, 2 and 3. A combination ladder can be used in either stepladder or leaning ladder mode. Known as 'multipurpose' or 'A' frame ladders.
- Multi Hinge Joint Ladders - should be Certified to EN 131 Part 4. Normally has one or more pairs of hinge joints and may be used as a stepladder or a leaning ladder.
- Telescopic Ladders - should be Certified to EN 131 Part 6. Telescopic sections reduce size for easier transportation and storage.
- Mobile Ladders with a Platform - should be Certified to EN 131 Part 7. Sometimes called 'warehouse steps', fitted with wheels for movement, larger platform with guardrails for safety.
- Roof Ladders - should be Certified to BS 8634. For use on pitched roofs with angles between 25-65 degrees. Not for use on roofs with a slope only on one side, as the ridge hook can't be properly located.
- **See Ladder Association Code of Practice Sections 7 and 10 & Ladder Association 'Safety Guidance on Portable Ladders'.**



Select the right class

- Professional and Non-Professional ladders have the same maximum total load of 150kg.
- **The key difference is their durability.** Professional ladders are put through 50,000 load test cycles, compared to 10,000 cycles for Non-Professional. That's 5 times more durability testing to withstand the demanding use on site!
- Pre-use check - just because the ladder was safe to use last time, doesn't mean it's safe to use this time. It could have been damaged in storage, transport or use. A pre-use check should be carried out by the competent user 1) at the beginning of the working day and 2) after something changes i.e. it's dropped, moved between areas, left unattended etc. The pre-use check is visual and functional to quickly establish if the ladder is safe to use NOW. **See Ladder Association Code of Practice Section 14.**
- Detailed inspections - should be carried out in addition to pre-use checks, again by a competent person, to make sure the ladder is safe for continued use, or identify if it needs repaired. Must be carried out at fixed intervals and recorded. As a guide, ladders used and stored in good conditions should be inspected as follows (at minimum): every 3 months (if in daily use), every 6 months (if used occasionally) and every 12 months (if used infrequently). **See Ladder Association Code of Practice Section 26.**
- The Ladder Association offers a half day inspection training course - view all courses at ladderassociation.org.uk/training

Useful references:

- **LA455 'Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders: A brief guide'** (available to download free from ladderassociation.org.uk)
- **Ladder Association Code of Practice** (available from ladderassociation.org.uk or via our mobile app)
- **Ladder Association 'Safety Guidance on Portable Ladders' EN131**

Select the right material & Select the right height

- Know the difference between standing height, maximum length and **safe working height - this is key!**
- **See Ladder Association Code of Practice Section 10.**