

Falls from step ladders can cause serious / fatal accidents so make sure if you are using a step ladder that you use it correctly. Many of these injuries are caused by inappropriate or incorrect use of the equipment.

**On a stepladder do not:**

- Overload it – you and anything you are carrying should not exceed the highest load stated on the stepladder;
- Use it in locations where the restraint devices cannot be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged;
- Use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder (**see Figure 6a**);
- Don't use the top three steps of swing-back or double-sided stepladders, where a step forms the very top of the stepladder (**see Figure 6b**).
- **DO NOT USE IN ANY AREA WHERE THERE IS A LIKELIHOOD OF BEING STRUCK BY VEHICLES**



**Figure 6a** Correct – two clear rungs. Don't work any higher up this type of stepladder.



**Figure 6b** Correct - 3 clear rungs. Don't work any higher up this type of stepladder.

When using stepladders, avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on working, by having the steps facing the work activity (**see Figures 7a and 7b**). Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided you should prevent the steps from tipping over, for example by tying the steps to a suitable point, or you should use a more suitable type of access equipment.



**Figure 7a** Incorrect - steps side-on to work activity



**Figure 7b** Correct - steps facing work activity

**Pre-use checks**

Look for obvious visual defects before using a ladder or stepladder. Check that:

- All the ladder feet are fitted;
- The feet are in good repair (not loose, missing, splitting, excessively worn, secure etc);
- The feet are clean - the feet should be in contact with the ground. Ladder feet should also be checked when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g. dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g. paving slabs), to ensure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g. soil, embedded stones or swarf) is making contact with the ground;
- All the screws, bolts and hinges are secure;
- On a stepladder, that the “spreaders” on the ladder can be locked into place.
- There are no other obvious signs of damage such as cracks.

If you find a problem, **DO NOT USE** the ladder. Remove from use and report to line manager.



## Toolbox Talk - 47 Safe Use of Step Ladders



I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure I undertake a pre-use check on any set of step ladders; and

If I am aware of any defect with the equipment, it shall not be used, it will be taken out of service and reported to my line manager immediately.

**By signing this acknowledgement you are confirming that you attended the toolbox talk and understand and agree with the content.**

**Employee to complete in block capitals**

NAME: ..... NUMBER: .....

GARAGE: ..... JOB TITLE: .....

SIGN: ..... DATE: .....

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