

Toolbox talks

Stepladders

Background information:

Stepladders are used for gaining access for inspection or very light work only. A risk assessment must show that other forms of access has been considered and ruled out before stepladders can be sanctioned. Most accidents occur because the steps are damaged or used incorrectly. Unsafe work at height is one of the most likely ways of getting injured or killed on site.

Hazards:

- Persons falling from height
- Failure of stepladder
- Overturning on uneven ground
- Falling objects (tools/materials)
- Stepladders blocking emergency exits
- Stepladders knocked over.

Health and safety points:

- All stepladders must be inspected before use
- Only class one stepladders must be used (class two are for domestic use only)
- Risk assessment will indicate where stepladders are to be used. If it is reasonably practicable to use mobile elevated work platforms or mobile tower scaffolds then they should always be used in preference to stepladders
- Stepladders can only be used if you have a valid permit, and you must comply with the conditions of the permit
- Ensure that a competent person carries out weekly inspections. Records must be kept of these inspections and some sites (eg Sellafeld) require the use of Laddertags to record inspections
- Never paint stepladders as defects may become hidden
- Stepladders can only be set up on firm, level ground. The legs must be fully extended
- Do not stand higher than 2m up a stepladder if you need access above this height, other access means must be used
- You must never stand on the top third of a stepladder
- Ideally the highest rung on which a person can stand should be identified with a sign
- Never carry material up or down a stepladder. You must have three points of contact. Tool belts, shoulder bags are ideal
- Never reach out from a stepladder, do not use it, report it to your supervisor
- Do not erect stepladders blocking emergency exits or access routes.

Question time:

- Q What are the only types of stepladders acceptable on site?
- Q What should always be considered before stepladders are used?
- Q What must you do if you find your stepladder damaged?
- Q What must you be in possession of before using a stepladder?

Have you got any questions?

Record questions on the attendance sheet.

Safety reminder:

Stepladders have a role to play, for example, where it is more risky to erect a mobile tower. Where mobile elevated work platforms or mobile towers can be used then that is the route to go down. If you are using stepladders then you must follow the rules.

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