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## Ladders / Step Ladders Safe Working Practices

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To enable the Council to fulfil its legal obligations under the existing Health and Safety legislation the following instructions should be strictly observed:-

1. All reasonable precautions should be taken when using ladders/step ladders to safeguard the health and safety of yourself and other persons who may be affected by your acts or omissions at work.
2. All ladders/step ladders should conform to British and European Standards.
3. Ladders/step ladders should be inspected before use to ensure that they are sound and free from defects. Be on the look-out for split stiles and treads, broken or loose rungs and missing tie bars. Loose hinges to back flap of step ladders and defective ropes must be replaced.
4. Never paint ladders/step ladders as this could cover up defects. Clear varnish may be used to protect timber ladders.
5. Use the correct height of ladder/step ladder for the job in hand. Do not improvise by standing ladders on top of bricks, blocks, boxes, chairs, etc., to gain extra height. Never lash two ladders together to make a longer one.
6. Ensure that ladder/step ladders are placed on a firm, level base.
7. Wherever possible, the tops of ladders should be firmly secure, particularly with heights of 3 metres and over. If this is impracticable then see that a fixing is made at the base but remember that this will not prevent side slipping.
8. When ladder is erected in a position where traffic has access a man should be placed on guard at the base. Alternatively, a space around the ladder should be fenced off for protection.
9. If a ladder/step ladder is erected close to a door then the door should be shut and locked in the opening position with a man on guard to prevent people walking through the door opening.
10. Ensure always that ladders are set at a safe angle. A useful rule to bear in mind is '4 up - 1 out'. This means the base should be positioned 1ft. (0.13m) out from the wall for every 4ft. (1.2m) of height.

11. Ladders which give access to scaffolds and working platforms must be securely tied to the landing place and extend at least 3ft. 6ins. (1.1m) above the platform.
12. Ladders are generally designed to support one person only. Two or more men on one ladder is likely to cause overloading and this must be avoided at all times.
13. Make sure that ladders are in the correct position for the jobs in hand. Do not over-reach or lean sideways from a ladder; always move the ladder to a more convenient position.
14. When ascending or descending a ladder always face it and use both hands to obtain a good hand-hold.
15. Beware of wet, greasy, icy rungs/treads.
16. Clean off mud and grease from your footwear before ascending. Make sure your footwear is suitable and in good condition.
17. On no account should the space between a ladder and any other foot-hold be straddled.
18. Care should be taken when raising and lowering heavy ladders. This is a job which should be done by at least two men. Whenever possible it is advisable to use a rope to lower a heavy ladder.
19. On no account should ladders be used horizontally for any purpose.
20. Metal ladders, wooden ladders with metal reinforcement rods and ladders which are wet must not be used near electrical equipment with exposed live conductors.
21. It is dangerous to carry tools or materials up and down ladders as this prevents a proper hand-hold being obtained. Tools can be carried in a holster attached to a belt or in a toolbag slung from a strap over the shoulder.
22. Don't leave ladders unattended in public places. If you have to leave the job for a while then either remove the ladder or secure a board to the rungs to prevent unauthorised access.
23. Ladders should not be climbed or worked from beyond the third run from the top. The top step of the step ladder should not be climbed or worked from and bucket/tool rests and rear parts of step ladders should not be stood on or made to bear excessive weight.