



## Health and Safety Policy

# THE USE AND CONTROL OF PORTABLE LADDERS

### UHSP/2/UCPL/94

This document sets out the University Health and Safety Policy with regard to the use and control of portable ladders. It has been approved by the Safety Executive Committee, in consultation with the Joint Safety Advisory Committee, and it will be subject to review.

Accidents may happen because ordinary and extension ladders, step-ladders and trestles that are portable (referred to as "ladders" for the purpose of this policy) are incorrectly used, have been inadequately inspected or stored in poor conditions, are damaged or otherwise defective, or because an unsuitable type has been selected. Ladders under the control of the Fire Brigades for fire-fighting and emergency purposes do NOT come within the scope of this document.

Portable ladders must not be loaned to contractors or visitors.

### Requirements for Registration and Inspection

Heads of Budget Centres are responsible for ensuring that:

- a single register is kept and maintained of all ladders, under their control;
- a generic numbering system exists to provide a unique identification for each ladder in use;
- each ladder is inspected at the time of registration and if approved, as being of sound manufacture and in good condition, a unique number will be allocated and the ladder marked accordingly together with the name of the budget centre;
- no ladder is put into use for the first time until it has been registered, inspected and passed;
- all ordinary and extension ladders over 3m (10ft) long, including all step-ladders and trestles providing a working platform or tread height exceeding 2.0m (6ft 6ins), are inspected at intervals not exceeding **six calendar months** at which time a label must be attached giving the end date of the inspection validity period;
- no ladder requiring a periodic inspection is used if it does not display an inspection label showing that the ladder is within the inspection validity period.

Persons responsible for those using ladders must be satisfied:

- that all ladders under their control carry an approval identification number/label and, where appropriate, a current inspection label;
- that the persons who will use the ladders are capable of doing so safely and have been informed of the requirements for the use of ladders including the following paragraphs below;
- that the choice of ladder is appropriate for the task involved.

## Requirements for Users of portable ladders

**In no circumstances may University employees and persons controlled by the University use unmarked and possibly defective ladders left unattended by Agents, Contractors, Customers etc. Portable ladders must not be loaned to persons who are not employees.**

Basic rules for the safe use of ladders are as follows:

- a) Always check personally that the ladder to be used is in good condition, undamaged and that it carries an approval identification number and, where appropriate, an inspection label with an end of validity date later than the date of use.
  
- b) In the case of ordinary or extension ladders:
  - (i) never use a ladder with a rise that is significantly more or less than 4 to 1.
  - (ii) the ladder must be long enough to extend at least 1.05m (3ft 6ins) above the stepping-off point;
  - (iii) the foot of an ordinary or extension ladder should be supported on a firm, level surface: it should not rest on a slippery surface nor on loose material nor be placed on anything to give extra height: the top should rest on a sound and reliable support; and
  - (iv) the bottom of an ordinary or extension ladder must always be footed until the top has been firmly lashed: if the top cannot be secured, such a ladder must be footed at all times when a person is using it: such a ladder which has been lashed at the top must also be footed whilst the lashing is being removed, and until the user has returned to ground level;
  
- c) Always be sure that step-ladders and trestles in use are placed on firm, even and level surfaces.
- d) The user must not over-reach when working on a ladder;
- e) Ladders must not be used in such a way as to span a gap over the side of a building to reach another building or structure.
- f) Take care with aluminium ladders when moving or using them near to overhead electrical conductors, such as power lines.
- g) Any person who is doubtful about the safety of a ladder or its proposed method of use should consult their supervisor.

## Disposal of portable ladders

Ladders which have either failed their inspection or are no longer required should be disposed of in a manner such that it can not be re-used. An appropriate entry should then be made in the portable ladder registry as to the date and method of disposal.

## Further information

Health and Safety Executive Guidance [Safe Use of Ladders and Step Ladders INDG455](#)

University Health and Safety Policy [Safe Working at Heights UHSP/27/SWH/2014](#)

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