



## Health and Safety Policy

# Safe Working at Height

UHSP/27/SWH/2014

This document sets out in more detail the arrangements for compliance with University Health and Safety Policy at Budget Centre level and it gives guidance on how these requirements may be met. This document forms a part of the University Health and Safety Policy.

NOTE: This policy replaces GUIDANCE/23/WH/06 *Working at Height*

May 2014  
UHSP/27/SWH/2014

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# Safe Working at Height

UHSP/26/SWH/2014

## INTRODUCTION

Falls from height are one of the main causes of death and major injury at work. The *Work at Height Regulations* aim to protect those working at height where there is a risk of a fall liable to cause injury. Where working at height cannot be avoided, a suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be undertaken. The work must be properly planned, appropriately supervised, and carried out in as safe a way as is reasonably practicable.

### Aim of the Policy

This policy sets out the arrangements that all **Heads of Budget Centres** should make to ensure work at height is carried out safely in areas under their control. There are further arrangements that the **Director of Estates**, and if appropriate, the **Director of Hospitality and Accommodation Services** should make in regard to the design, construction and maintenance of the University's buildings and other structures.

### Scope of the Policy

The Regulations do not specify any height limit; the legislation encourages a risk-based approach to work at any height where injury may result if suitable precautions are not taken.

This policy applies to **all** work under the control of the University, indoor and outside and covers a range of circumstances, e.g.

- design and construction of buildings and other structures
- using work equipment (a work platform, scaffolding, or a ladder)
- work on a roof or up a tree
- work next to openings such as cellars or excavations
- use of inappropriate means (standing on a table or chair) to change a light bulb.

Working at height in an office, or similar low risk environment, such as accessing top shelves, can be addressed through the general risk assessment process, where an office risk assessment can be adapted for use. Please see Guidance for Risk Assessment in Offices [GUIDANCE/7/RAO/05](#) for further information.

### Exceptions to the Policy

- The Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007 apply to those who work at height providing instruction or leadership to people engaged in caving or climbing by way of sport, recreation, team building or similar activities in Great Britain. These are not included in this policy; further advice on these activities must be sought from the Health and Safety Unit.
- Travelling up and down stairs (though it does apply to *working* on stairs).

Additionally some common sense should be applied, e.g. falling off a roadside curb whilst working would not be considered 'working at height'.

### Definition of Competency

There are requirements in this policy for competency. Competency is the combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply them to perform a task safely.

# POLICY

## Responsibilities

**Heads of Budget Centres** must make arrangements in areas under their control to ensure:

- all work at height is avoided where possible
- all work at height is properly planned and organised, ensuring this is proportionate to the risks involved in the work
- the risks from work at height are assessed and the appropriate access equipment is selected and used
- those involved in work at height are suitably trained and competent for the task
- the provisions within the Code of Practice are observed
- personal fall protection equipment provided for work at height is properly maintained and inspected before first use and then at least every six months or after circumstances which might jeopardize safety have occurred, of which records are kept. This includes checking that none has been in service for more than the manufacturers recommended time period.
- the risks from falling objects are properly controlled
- a register is kept and maintained of all access equipment under their control, with a system to identify individual items
- permits to work are issued where access to roofs is required and there are risks associated to working there (e.g. falls from the roof or through fragile surfaces, or exposure to harmful substances discharged around roof level)

**Director of Estates** must make arrangements in areas under his control to ensure:

- project managers question designers on their strategy for avoiding or minimising the risks from work at height. Those who design workplaces have an important role to play in preventing falls from height and there is a specific duty on designers in the Construction, Design and Management Regulations to consider risks to those who;
  - clean any window, transparent or translucent wall, ceiling or roof in or on a structure, or maintain the permanent fixture and fittings
  - use a structure designed to access a place of work at height
  - may be affected by such work (staff, students or members of the public)
- all roof areas (including internal structures such as mezzanines) are assessed for safety precautions, identifying fragile surfaces, areas where edge protection is required, or requirement to control unauthorised access
- a register of all fragile surfaces and roof areas requiring a “permit to work” is maintained
- all fixed fall protection systems, such as work restraint cable systems, fall arrest cable systems, anchorage points (eyebolts) and suspended access systems, are maintained and examined at intervals not exceeding 12 months, and for arranging repair, replacement, or full decommissioning; and provision of alternative systems where equipment is found to be sub-standard
- personal fall protection equipment is supplied correctly for each installation and inspected before first use and then at least every six months or after circumstances which might jeopardize safety have occurred, of which records are kept. This includes checking that none has been in service for more than the manufacturers recommended time period

## **Director of Hospitality and Accommodation Services**

The Director of Hospitality and Accommodation will have the same responsibilities as other Heads of Budget Centre. However should he commission or organise work, e.g. window cleaning, he will have additional responsibilities including ensuring the competency of contactors and their method of work.

### **Individuals must:**

- follow the correct procedures
- check equipment before use (e.g. ladders, safety harnesses etc.)
- bring to the attention of management any unsafe situations or procedures
- not put themselves or others at risk.

### **Risk Assessment**

All work at height must be subject to appropriate risk assessment, the complexity of which will depend on the risk of injury that has been identified. The assessment should not just consider the height of a fall (the higher the fall, the more likely it is to cause injury, although injury may be sustained even in falls from lesser height, i.e. less than two metres), it should also take into account:

- environmental conditions (especially slippery conditions or high winds)
- materials onto, into, or through which, someone could fall (they may be hard, there may be sharp edges or impalement hazards, or they may be fragile and cannot support a person's weight).
- risks from falling materials or objects (e.g. of materials stored at height, or dropped tools – barriers and warning signs may be needed to prevent access to danger areas).
- hazards of using mobile elevated work platforms (MEWP) such as trapping, crushing or being struck and the presence of any overhead cables in the vicinity.
- stability of the structure that the work equipment will be used close to or against.

The aim is to identify practical precautions that are proportionate to the risk i.e. kick stool, ladder, step ladder, mobile platform, fall protection equipment etc. Where it is not reasonably practicable to prevent falls or mitigate their effects then residual risks should be addressed by suitable instruction, training, and safe systems of work.

### **Managing Work at Height**

Work must be planned, organised, supervised, and carried out by competent persons, using the following hierarchy of controls:

- avoid work at height wherever possible where there is a risk of significant injury..
- design or modify storage and display panels so that they can be accessed from ground level.
- position lighting where it can be maintained without working at height or use banks of lighting that can be lowered to the ground.
- use long life-light bulbs that do not need to be changed so often.
- prevent falls where work at height cannot be avoided (by using suitable measures, e.g. guard rails or work platforms, that protect all workers)

- mitigate falls: minimise the distance and consequences of a fall where the risk of a fall cannot be eliminated (by using personal protective equipment, e.g. fall arrest systems)
- take additional *measures* if it is not reasonably practicable to avoid, prevent or mitigate falls (e.g. provide additional instruction and training, demarcate edges with painted lines).

Appendix 1 contains practical guidance on different tasks involving working at height.

## Selecting Access Equipment

### Ladders

Ladders are only to be used as working platforms when it is NOT reasonably practicable to use any other safer method or equipment. There are different types of access equipment that are more suitable to use than a ladder, e.g. podium steps. Ladders are only to be used as a means of access for low risk work at relatively low heights where the task is of short duration (i.e. accessing a book shelf, changing a light bulb).

- in line with the recommendation of the Health and Safety Executive University ladders and stepladders should be Class 1 'Industrial' or the European Standard EN 131.
- ladders not inspected or not displaying an inspection label must not be used

The management and control of ladders must follow the University Health and Safety Policy [Use and Control of Portable Ladders](#) UHSP/2/UCL/94 and use of ladders must follow HSE guidance in Appendix 2.

### Mobile Elevating Work Platforms / Cherry Pickers

The use of mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs) must follow HSE guidance and comply with the following:

- only trained and certified operators may use MEWPs
- a documented plan must be in place for the use of all MEWPs and is to include emergency and rescue procedures
- the plan is to be reviewed before the work commences to allow for any changes in circumstances
- a copy of the thorough examination report must be obtained, checked and kept before the equipment is allowed on site

### Mobile Tower Scaffolds / Scaffolding

It is essential that only trained competent staff have access to this type of equipment and that suitable supervision is in place.

The use of mobile tower scaffolds must follow HSE and PASMA guidance and consideration given to the following topics when planning and assessing their use.

- erecting
- moving
- using
- dismantling
- inspecting
- protecting bystanders

Scaffolding must only be assembled, dismantled, or significantly modified by appropriately trained and competent contractors under competent levels of supervision and must be subject to regular inspection. Where scaffolding is complex, it will be necessary for a competent person to draw up a plan for its assembly, use and dismantling which should be undertaken by a University approved contractor.

## Personal Fall Protection Equipment

Personal fall protection systems such as lanyards and harnesses must only be used if the risk assessment indicates that the use of safer collective controls is not feasible.

All staff using fall protection systems must be adequately trained in their use and there must be an adequate rescue plan in place.

The Work at Height Safety Association have a number of technical guidance documents on the safe use of personal fall protection equipment.

## Inspection

Every item of equipment used for work at height should be subject to the following procedures:-

- each item of equipment for work at height should be individually identifiable.
- each item of equipment should be tagged to show the identification marker and that it is in a safe condition for use, showing the date of the next formal inspection.
- each item of equipment should be subject to periodic formal inspections (e.g. 6 monthly intervals, or more regularly dependent on use and environmental conditions).
- each item of equipment must be subject to a thorough visual inspection before use.
- equipment must be re-inspected should an incident occur that may have caused the equipment to become unsafe; and for external equipment should bad weather conditions be experienced.
- a full register of equipment must be maintained and the findings from each periodic inspection or re-inspection due to an incident or an occurrence be recorded, along with any actions taken to show rectification or disposal of unsafe equipment.
- access to equipment for working at height should be controlled and only be available to and used by competent personnel who have received the required training.
- all ordinary and extension ladders over 3m long, including all step-ladders and trestles providing a working platform or tread height exceeding 2m, are to be inspected at intervals not exceeding six months
- for tower scaffolds with working platforms less than 2m in height, the tower must be inspected:
  - after assembly in any position
  - after any event liable to have affected its stability
  - at suitable intervals depending on frequency and conditions of use.
- for tower scaffolds with working platform 2m or more in height, the tower must be inspected:
  - after assembly in any position;
  - after any event liable to have affected its stability; and
  - at intervals not exceeding seven days.
- mobile elevating work platforms (MEWPs), and any material handling attachments, must be thoroughly examined at least every six months
- the MEWP operator must carry out daily/pre-use inspection and function checks
- inspection of scaffolding must be carried out by a competent person every 7 days and immediately after incident occurring or bad weather being experienced.
- personal fall protection equipment must be inspected before first use and then at least every six months or after circumstances which might jeopardize safety have occurred

## Roof Access / Fragile Surfaces

Estates are responsible for ensuring that no unauthorised persons have access to roofs. Doors, hatches etc. leading to roofs must be locked and access must be subject to a permit to work system.

Individuals must not be allowed to use roof safety systems unless they have received appropriate training. Those placing contracts for work on a roof must ensure that contractors provide a method statement, risk assessment and proof of training before commencing work on the roof.

Where work on or near fragile roofs cannot be avoided then all reasonably practicable control measures will be implemented to mitigate the possibility of falls of people or objects. The control measures must include:-

- the selection and use of suitable platforms, coverings, guard rails to minimise the risk of falls or falling objects.
- where there is a residual risk remaining then minimise the distance and effect of a fall.
- implement the use of suitable and sufficient barriers, warning notices and signage to clearly indicate and warn others of the danger zone.
- access and egress should be restricted to authorised persons only and using the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at all times.

## Contractors

University contractors who conduct work at height must have their own health and safety policies to ensure the risks to their staff, sub-contractors and University occupants are adequately managed. They must conduct a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and work to approved method statements with adequate control measures to mitigate the risk of injury to themselves or others.

University Project Managers or Schools who employ contractors will be responsible for the contractors and ensure that any work at height carried out during the activities is adequately managed and risks controlled.

## FURTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Further information on working at height and fall prevention can be found on the Health and Safety Executive's 'Working at Height' microsite <http://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>

Health and Safety Executive, The Work at Height Regulations 2005 A brief Guide. INDG401  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.htm>

Health and Safety Executive, Safe use of ladders and stepladders. INDG 455  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.htm>

Health and Safety Executive. Working at height FAQs (including ladders and scaffolding and tower scaffolding, roof work)  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/faq-height.htm>

Health and Safety Executive. Mobile Elevated Work Platforms.  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/safetytopics/mewp.htm>

Health and Safety Executive, Inspecting fall arrest equipment made from webbing or rope, INDG 367  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg367.pdf>

University information webpage [Working at Height](#)

## Working at height - Practical Guidance

**N.B. The following guidance is provided as an example of best practice, and should be adapted to suit the specific work being undertaken following a suitable and sufficient risk assessment.**

Action	What could go wrong	Best practice
Placing or retrieving items stored above head height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person knocked on head by falling items when replacing items on high shelf</li> <li>• Shelf collapses causing items to fall on person</li> <li>• Use of wrong equipment as above</li> <li>• Injury when retrieving sports items from high girders/nets and other structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a 'heavy box lower shelf' policy (ideally heaviest items should be at waist/trolley height to minimise bending or stretching).</li> <li>• Review storage so that frequently needed items are easily accessible</li> <li>• Loose items must not to be stored in high places.</li> <li>• Provide proper equipment for the task i.e. step ladders with handrails</li> <li>• Train people in the safe use of equipment</li> <li>• Use lightweight telescopic pole to remove items from high ledges</li> </ul>
Opening and closing windows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person falls off ledge whilst opening window</li> <li>• Person falls from unprotected window</li> <li>• Poorly maintained window falls out of frame striking person standing underneath</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install remote means of opening high windows (e.g. long handled poles or mechanical openers)</li> <li>• Fit window opening limiters to all windows above ground floor</li> <li>• Ensure windows and doors are maintained in a safe condition</li> </ul>
Falls from height during drama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person falls from mobile tower scaffold when changing stage lights</li> <li>• Item falls from gantry area onto audience</li> <li>• Stage light falls during adjusting and strikes another person</li> <li>• Person climbs up outside of tower scaffold which overturns and injures them</li> <li>• Scaffold collapses during use due to unsafe erection</li> <li>• Person falls through open trap door</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only trained persons to change stage lights</li> <li>• Consideration of installing lighting rigs which can be lowered to ground level to reduce the need for working at height.</li> <li>• Persons trained in safe use of access equipment through recognised training providers.</li> <li>• Cascade training for all people involved on hazard recognition and risk</li> <li>• Code of conduct for persons' behaviour in the drama studio/theatre adopted and published to all who may be involved.</li> <li>• Drama department has health and safety policy detailing safe arrangements for adjusting lights, working on gantry and other related activities</li> <li>• Provide equipment which is suitable to the users to enable safe access to theatre/studio areas (e.g. mobile tower access scaffold, stepladders, ladders)</li> </ul>

Action	What could go wrong	Best practice
Falls from height during drama (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fall from stage during production</li> </ul>	<p>and mobile elevated working platforms).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and readily available.</li> <li>• Frequent documented checks take place to ensure the safe working condition of access equipment.</li> <li>• Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited.</li> <li>• Access equipment is restricted to those competent in its safe use.</li> <li>• Where persons or others have pre-existing medical conditions/other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place.</li> <li>• Access to backstage/gantry and other areas are restricted at all times and especially when stage is set for production.</li> <li>• Gantry areas scaffolds etc have appropriate edge protection and handrails which are subject to frequent documented checks.</li> <li>• Create an exclusion zone where necessary beneath areas where work is taking place.</li> <li>• Ensure the edge of the stage is clearly indicated, e.g. footlights etc.</li> </ul>
Putting up displays, signs, notices, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst using wrong equipment (table/desk/chair/books) gives way when person stands on it</li> <li>• Person using ladder/step ladder over reaches causing ladder to topple over</li> <li>• Person walks into ladder causing it to topple over</li> <li>• Person drops display on someone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install washing line style assembly, using pulleys which can be raised and lowered from ground level</li> <li>• Restrict displays to head height</li> <li>• Consider room layout to ensure that display boards are easily accessible</li> <li>• Displays are prepared as far as possible before putting them up</li> <li>• Persons instructed not to climb on chairs/tables or other furniture to access display boards</li> <li>• Arrangements for safety are discussed and agreed</li> <li>• Provide equipment which is suitable for users to enable safe access to display areas (e.g. kick step type stools and properly designed low steps with hand rails).</li> <li>• Areas where ladders or other access equipment is to be used is clearly defined by use of signs and barriers used if deemed necessary</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>What could go wrong</b>	<b>Best practice</b>
Putting up displays, signs, notices, etc. (cont.)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and readily available.</li> <li>• Frequent documented checks take place to ensure the safe working condition of access equipment.</li> <li>• Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited.</li> <li>• The use of ladders and other access equipment is restricted to those trained and competent in its safe use.</li> <li>• Where persons have pre-existing medical conditions or other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place.</li> <li>• Encourage staff to wear appropriate footwear (heel-less or low heeled shoes with non/slip soles).</li> </ul>
Maintenance duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person falls when standing on wheelie bin to gain height</li> <li>• Person overreaches and falls off a ladder which is not footed or tied during use</li> <li>• Person blown off edge of flat roof when retrieving football</li> <li>• Person falls through roof void when walking on joists</li> <li>• Person falls from desk when standing on it to access light diffuser.</li> <li>• Person drops a hammer whilst fixing a loose gutter striking a person below</li> <li>• Ladder placed on uneven ground slips and person falls.</li> <li>• Person falls from ladder when carrying a tin of paint to first storey</li> <li>• Person falls through fragile roof</li> <li>• Ladder rung breaks when person steps onto it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessment prior to any work at height.</li> <li>• Consider weather conditions before planning any outside work</li> <li>• Staff instructed not to climb on furniture, meter cupboards, bins or other inappropriate fixed or mobile structures.</li> <li>• Check for environmental hazards e.g. overhead cables, uneven surfaces, wet ground</li> <li>• Arrangements for safety are discussed and agreed.</li> <li>• Provide equipment which is suitable to the individual users to enable safe access</li> <li>• All access equipment is suitable for purpose, checked before use and readily available.</li> <li>• Consideration should be given to hiring suitable equipment for specific jobs (e.g. mobile elevated work platforms, mobile access tower scaffolds) with staff trained in safe use by equipment supplier.</li> <li>• Frequent documented checks take place to ensure the safe working condition of access equipment.</li> <li>• Procedures are in place for damaged access equipment to be removed and further use prohibited.</li> <li>• Access equipment is restricted to those competent in its safe use.</li> <li>• Consider use of fall arrest systems depending on nature of task, equipment and</li> </ul>

Action	What could go wrong	Best practice
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst cleaning air vents person falls from workbench they are standing on</li> <li>• Person electrocuted when fixing window from an aluminium ladder when he came into contact with overhead power cable</li> </ul>	<p>duration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where persons have pre-existing medical conditions or other factors which may affect their ability to use such equipment a separate risk assessment is in place.</li> <li>• Adequate and appropriate signs are in place to warn of hazards below work area.</li> <li>• Ground level area where access route is located is cordoned off to prevent contact with any persons who may be on the premises</li> <li>• Work scheduled to take place when persons/others are not in the immediate area.</li> <li>• Persons are aware of site specific risks including fragile roofs.</li> <li>• All fragile roof areas are clearly labelled.</li> <li>• Access equipment is removed and secured when not in use to prevent unauthorised use.</li> <li>• Appropriate footwear is worn.</li> <li>• Accompanying tools and equipment carried on person are in tool belts or secured appropriately.</li> <li>• Items are lifted using the appropriate equipment (e.g. pulleys) and appropriate safe system of work</li> <li>• Use only battery powered tools when working at height.</li> <li>• When working on roof, caretakers to maintain safe distance from roof edge.</li> </ul>
Building work and repairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractor falls when working on a ladder which is not secured</li> <li>• Person gains access to scaffold and falls from height</li> <li>• Items fall from roof repair work onto persons below</li> <li>• Incorrectly assembled scaffold collapses injuring contractors, staff and students</li> <li>• Contractor killed when he falls from edge of roof</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-selection vetting by Budget Centre to include Health &amp; Safety procedures, training, qualifications and competence.</li> <li>• Contractor's work is planned before/after school or during holiday periods where possible</li> <li>• Budget Centre to check contractor's method statements to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for safety including personal protective equipment, fall arrest systems and how the job will be undertaken.</li> <li>• Issue site specific guidance e.g. location of fragile roofs, overhead cables/other site hazards to contractor and require signature for receipt of information.</li> <li>• Budget Centre to put into place arrangements with contractor for communication, site access, safe segregation, signage, security and other</li> </ul>

<b>Action</b>	<b>What could go wrong</b>	<b>Best practice</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contractor electrocuted when he damages overhead cables when working on ladder.</li> <li>• Hot bitumen spills from roof onto persons below during roof repair work</li> <li>• Contractor falls through fragile roof onto persons below</li> <li>• Contractor overbalances on ceiling joist and falls through roof</li> </ul>	<p>related issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior management to observe safe working practices of contractor.</li> <li>• Communicate any changes in safety arrangements to school staff e.g. changes in access routes.</li> <li>• Budget Centre to stop any works they feel are unsafe or inappropriate.</li> <li>• Budget Centre to seek further advice from technical experts the Estates department/other where they have concerns regarding contractor safety issues.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2

### Safe Working with Ladders, Steps and Stools Etc.

If possible, workplaces and work should be planned so as to avoid the need to work above ground level, i.e. 'at height'

If this is not possible then some means of access will be required, e.g. ladders, steps, stools etc.

**If used incorrectly these have the potential to cause serious injuries.**

**When using ladders etc a few simple rules should be followed:**

- The correct equipment should be carefully selected
- Staff should be made aware of what equipment is available and how to use it correctly (see below)
- The equipment should be regularly inspected and maintained in a safe condition
- Sensible clothing and flat shoes should be worn
- Managers and supervisors should comply with the University's Health and Safety Policy; *Use and Control of Portable Ladders* UHSP/2/UCPL/94
- Only University ladders should be used.
- Ladders should not be lent to non-University staff, e.g. to contractors etc.

### How to Use Ladders Safely

Taken from *Top Tips for Ladder and Step Ladder Safety* - INDG455 ([www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.htm) published by the Health and Safety Executive.)

### Step ladders

#### Set up:

- Daily pre-use check (feet included)
- Ensure there is space to fully open
- Use any locking devices
- Ground should be firm and level
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

### In use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10kg)
- Do not work off the top two steps unless you have a safe handhold on the steps
- Avoid side-on working
- Do not overreach -make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles and keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task



Facing work, more than 2 steps from top of step ladder

1. Position ladder properly:

- fully open stepladder on level surface and lock spreaders in place

2. Use ladder that is long enough:

- never climb on top two steps
- never place stepladder on boxes or unstable bases to gain extra height

3. Climb and use ladder carefully:

- maintain 3 points of contact
- brace yourself with your free hand if possible
- always face the treads
- do not overreach or lean to one side
- never carry heavy or bulky objects up or down



### Leaning ladders

## Set up:

- Do a daily pre-use check (include ladder feet)
- Secure it
- Ground should be firm and level
- Maximum safe ground back slope (down and away) 6 degrees
- Have a strong upper resting point (not plastic guttering)
- Floors should be clean, not slippery

## In use

- Short duration work (maximum 30 minutes)
- Light work (up to 10 kg)
- Ladder angle 75 degrees 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- Always grip the ladder when climbing
- Do not work off the top three rungs – this provides a handhold
- Do not overreach - make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the ladder
- keep both feet on the same rung or step throughout the task

## Ladder [Step ladder] Check

- Is it a University ladder? (you should not use non-University ladders)
- Has it a current inspection label?
- General condition sound? (clean & dry, free from wet paint, oil, mud, etc).
- No cracks?
- No rungs missing or loose?
- Connecting ropes OK? (step ladders)
- Not painted? (ladders should not be painted as paint can hide damage)
- No stiles damaged or bent? (stiles are the outside uprights on a ladder)
- No warping or splitting? (timber)
- No corrosion? (metal)
- No sharp edges or dents? (metal)
- No rungs bent? (metal)
- Caps/rubber fittings OK? (all metal ladders should have slip-resistant rubber or plastic feet.)

## If in doubt, don't use

## Some 'don'ts'

- Don't: Use ladders in strong winds
- Don't: Use ladders near power lines
- Don't: Carry heavy or long materials up a ladder
- Don't: Reach too far forwards or sideways
- Don't: Have more than one person on the steps at a time
- Don't: Use the handrail to gain extra height



Correct: angle, 3 points of contact



Correct angle 75 degrees (1 out, 4 up)



Good foot treads



Bad practice: foot on ledge

## Kick stools

- Where kick stools are used they should be maintained in a safe condition
- Don't lean over when standing on a kick stool
- They should only be used for light tasks, e.g. shelving and retrieving books



Bad practice: Excessive leaning