

Ladders Policy

St James' Church, Silsden

Our Vision is to be Confident Christians, Growing in Christ, and Making Him Known

1/ Use of Ladders (Leaning & Stepladders)

Ladders should only be used for minor tasks of short duration, which only require the use of one hand, so the other hand can be used to hold on to the ladder. Where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (e.g. to hold a nail while starting to knock it in, starting a screw etc.), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences if one happened. Duration of work from a ladder should not exceed 30 minutes otherwise alternative methods of access should be used.

By Law (April 2005) ladders can be used for working at height, where a risk assessment has justified not using other forms of access for working at height such as scaffolding, manual elevated work platforms (MEWP / Cherry picker) etc. Otherwise consider using a contractor who has the correct equipment.

Select the best type of ladder for the task considering the correct construction material and appropriate length. Ladders should not be painted as this can hide defects. For electrical work only use ladders constructed from non-conductive materials (Wood, Fibre Glass). Allow one meter of ladder length above the highest rung you use. Never stand on the top three rungs (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder). Leaning Ladders should not be used for work if your feet are more than five meters above ground level and stepladders if your feet are more than two meters above ground level.

2/ Stepladders

Stepladders are suitable for small tasks of short duration where it is not possible to lean a ladder against a wall or other support. They should only be used for minor maintenance tasks. They comprise a frame with a small working platform at the top which can be used to hold tools and materials. The platform must never be used to stand on. There must be a mechanism to prevent the legs from spreading out and a safety catch to prevent the joint from opening. The height of the steps must not exceed three times the base width. When deciding if it is safe to carry out a

particular task on a stepladder where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g. to put a box on a shelf, hang wallpaper, install a smoke detector on a ceiling), this needs to be justified, taking into account:

- The height of the task
- Whether a handhold is still available to steady yourself before and after the task
- Whether it is light work
- Whether it avoids side loading
- Whether it avoids overreaching
- Whether the stepladder can be tied (e.g. when side-on working)

3/ Ladder Checks

Before use, the ladder must be checked to ensure that the general condition is sound and that it is clean and dry, free from wet paint, oil, mud, or other slippery substances. The following checks must be made prior to use: -

- No cracks
- No rungs missing, bent or loose
- No stiles (outside uprights) damaged or bent
- No warping or splitting of wooden ladders
- No corrosion of metal ladders
- No sharp edges (metal) or splinters (wood)
- Foot pads, caps and other rubber fittings in place and sound

If you spot any defects report them to a member of the PCC.

4/ Ladder Positioning

A/ Leaning Ladder

The ladder should be placed on a firm, level, dry surface. Where this is not possible, for example working on grass, the feet should be tied to stakes in the ground to stop slipping and a large flat board placed underneath the feet to prevent them sinking into the ground.

The ladder should only be set against structures capable of supporting the load that will be imposed upon them.

Ensure the ladder cannot be struck by passing traffic, or pedestrians hit by falling objects. Cordon off the work area with cones or barrier tape and as a last resort have a person standing guard at the base).

The ladder should be set at an angle of 75 degrees, one unit of measure out from the wall or support for every four units of measure up.

B/ Stepladders

Check all four stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level.

Ensure any locking devices are engaged.

5/ Safe use

When using a ladder the following should be considered: -

- Keep your body facing the ladder at all times centred between the stiles
- Don't reach too far forward or sideways or stand with one foot on the ladder and one on something else
- Don't overstretch. Climb down and reposition the ladder
- Keep both hands free to hold the ladder as much as possible. Use a tool belt for carrying tools, and rung hooks for hanging paint pots
- Hold on to the ladder with one hand when working
- Wear strong flat shoes or boots with good grip
- Do not wear sandals or slip-ons, or have bare feet
- Do not use ladders in strong winds or when raining
- Only use a ladder if you feel completely confident
- Don't use a ladder near overhead powerlines
- Place ladder on level ground – refer to the manufacturer's pictograms on the side of the ladder. Use proprietary levelling devices, not ad-hoc packing such as bricks, blocks, timbers etc
- Place ladders on solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc.), not on soft surfaces such as lawns, flowerbeds
- Position ladder where it will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows. If necessary, secure doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible.

6/ Routine Maintenance

All ladders have an identification number and are recorded in the maintenance log.

Ladders will be periodically inspected and segregated for repair or safe disposal.

All ladders must be cleaned before being returned to the storage location, ensuring all climbing or gripping surfaces are free from oil, grease or slippery substances.

7/ Storage

Large stepladders are stored in the Pied Piper Store and chained in position. Leaning ladders are stored chained and locked on brackets fixed in the passage between the Church and Church Hall, leading to the street. Two small stepladders are stored in the Vestry and the Kitchen Pantry.