MINIMUM STANDARD

Safe use of ladders

The following Minimum Standard is applicable on all projects

Scope

This document provides a minimum standard to ensure the safe use of ladders and applies to Unitas employees and subcontractors. It should be read in conjunction with Unitas Work at Height Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-049).

Requirements

Risk Assessment

Prior to the use of any ladder an assessment must be undertaken to ensure the Work at Height Regulations hierarchy is considered. Refer to Work at Height Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-049) and Risk and Impact Assessment Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-014)

Ladder (not including Stepladders)

A ladder is a piece of work at height equipment that is used for climbing up and down and consists of two vertical stiles joined together by a set of horizontal rungs. Ladders are available in various lengths and may be constructed as a single length or more than one length that is extendable to suit the height you require.

Use of ladders for access only

A ladder can be used for the purpose of gaining access into or onto a place of work such as a loft space or a scaffold platform.

Use of ladders as a place of work

Stand-alone ladders are not permitted as a place of work for any planned or responsive work, internal or external - only tethered ladder systems used by suitably trained persons may be used in these instances. The **only** exception to this is where a visual inspection is being carried out up to a height not exceeding one storey high.

Stability of ladders

Ladders used for access or for visual inspection up to one storey high must be stabilised as follows:

- Tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied, where this is not practical, secure with an effective ladder stability device;
- If this is not possible, then securely wedge the ladder, e.g. wedge the stiles against a wall;
- If you can't achieve any of these options, foot the ladder**. Footing is the last resort**.
- Avoid it, where 'reasonably practicable', by using other access equipment.

Source: INDG455 for further guidance.

Ladder Classification

Only class 1 ladders that are in sound condition are to be used on Unitas sites.

Class 1 ladder – Industrial standard, heavy duty, for frequent use with a maximum SWL of 175KG.

Telescopic ladders or three way ladders to BS EN 131 can be used for accessing lofts. If the telescopic and three way ladders are being used vertically then a ladder stability product needs to use used at the bottom of the ladder to prevent falls.

Tethered Ladder
System (e.g. Tetra)

This is a specifically designed system that enables the ladder to be tied into a structure for stability and also has a running line attached to the ladder for the user to secure themselves to by attaching a harness and lanyard to the line which reduces the distance of any fall to a minimum. Only trained personnel may use the tethered ladder system.

Equipment maintenance / inspection

Daily – persons using a ladder must carry out daily pre-use checks of all equipment prior to starting work. Any faults identified must be reported to the Team Leader and work must not take place until they have authorised works to commence.

Monthly – managers are responsible for monthly inspections of ladders recorded on form SHEMS-FOR-GR-147 and held on file.

Six monthly Formal inspections - formal recorded ladder equipment inspections must be carried out by a competent person (possibly an external provider) to ensure all the work at height equipment is fit for use; records of these inspections using form SHEMS-FOR-GR-148 are to be held on file.