

Stop, Think and be Safe

Working from height is a very high-risk activity, and can affect you just as easily at home as it can at work.

It is a known fact within the construction industry, that falling from height is one of the most common causes of major injuries and death. Responsible employers go to considerable lengths to ensure their employees' safety. However, when it comes to doing DIY jobs around the home, most of us tend not to be so careful, but even something as simple as changing a bulb in a light fitting could result in disaster.

The basic principle is to avoid working at height wherever possible. If it's possible to do the job standing on the floor, then you should do so. If not possible, don't be tempted to stand on something unstable, such as a swivel chair; choose the right equipment for the job.

The most common types of equipment for temporarily working at height are:

- Low-level work platforms
- Ladders
- Aluminium towers
- Powered access platforms

In this article, we discuss ladders. Future issues of the newsletter will cover the other types.

Ladders should only be used for a short duration of time and if the job is considered a low risk:

Here are some sensible tips:

The ladder should be:

- Positioned correctly on a firm, level surface,
- Prevented from moving or slipping.
- Resting on a firm surface at the top e.g. don't rest it against guttering or a window pane.
- Long enough to do the job safely,
- Have a handhold available to allow the worker to maintain 3 points of contact where possible,
- Used without over-reaching,
- Inspected and checked regularly.

REMEMBER

- You can rent an anti-slip device from us.
- You can rent a ladder stand-off from us.
- Only carry lightweight materials and tools.
- Do not exceed the maximum weight limit on the ladder (see safety sticker).

Don't forget ladders can be useful for the right job – Ladders can be lethal if used on the wrong job!