



# FAST FACTS

WORKING AT HEIGHT FF:027:01

ISSUE DATE: MARCH 2019 | REVIEW DATE: MAY 2024



## WHAT IS WORKING AT HEIGHT?

Working at height means working in a place where a person could be injured by falling from it, even if it is at or below ground level (except a staircase in a permanent workplace).

Some examples of activities covered by working at height include:

- using a kick stool or stepladder in a stock room or to access overhead shelving
- changing/hanging curtains in bays
- changing bulbs or ceiling tiles
- using trestles and ladders to paint or clean
- order picking using a fork-lift truck with an integrated platform
- erecting or working on a ladder/scaffold



## Can you avoid work at height?

Before commencing work at height, your manager should assess potential risks.

An obvious way to reduce the risk of injury from work at height is to avoid the need to access high levels. Where this is not possible, consider the following points:

- When storing equipment, try to seek alternative locations to avoid the need to store equipment at height
- If space is limited and storing items at a height is necessary, ensure that only lightweight, infrequently used items are stored on the higher shelves and that they are stacked securely
- Step ladders or kick stools should only be used for access to higher levels. Furniture such as chairs, beds, or desks should never be used
- If equipment is unsuitable for work at heights then you must report the issue to your line manager before carrying out the specific task
- If a ladder or kickstool is deemed unsafe it needs to be removed from use and disposed of appropriately

## Kick Stools

Kick stools are designed not to move when you apply weight to them however the following points must be considered prior to use:

- Ensure wheels are running freely
- Ensure there is no debris on the wheels or steps and rubber surfaces are secured
- Before use, check that the kick stool locks into position when you apply weight
- Check that the rubber on the bottom of the kick stool is in place and free from damage



You should wear appropriate footwear to improve your stability when using a kick stool.

Ensure that the clothes you are wearing do not pose a trip hazard e.g. by catching in the heel of your shoe when mounting or dismounting the kick stool.

Do not carry items in both hands when standing on the kick stool.

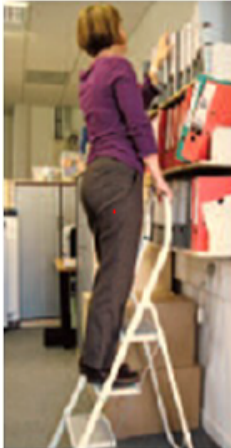


## WORKING AT HEIGHT

### Using a Step Ladder Dos & Don'ts



#### DOs When using a step ladder:

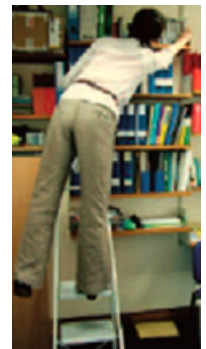


- ✓ It is important to visually check the step ladder for any signs of damage before use. If there are any obvious issues, report them to your manager immediately and remove from use
- ✓ Ensure the surrounding area is free from clutter and there is clear access to the steps (or feet) of the step ladder
- ✓ The step ladder must rest firmly on the floor without the risk of it slipping or moving during the task
- ✓ Always maintain at least 3 points of contact with the ladder (2 feet and a hand or 2 feet and your body)
- ✓ Always face forward while using the stepladder and adjust the positioning of the ladder as needed
- ✓ If you are concerned regarding your medical fitness to complete a task discuss with your Line Manager

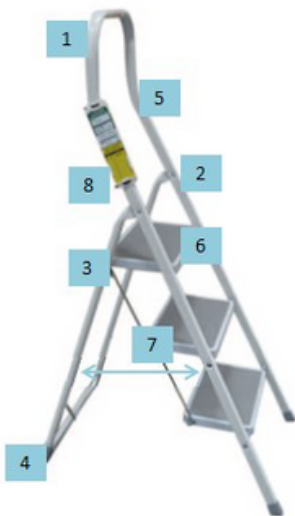


#### DON'Ts When using a step ladder:

- ✗ Do not use a step ladder in an area where there is potential to be knocked over e.g. behind a doorway or on a busy corridor
- ✗ Do not twist your body to one side or stretch away from the ladder
- ✗ Do not overreach while on a step ladder. This will make your position on the stepladder unstable. Make sure your waist and hips stay within the vertical uprights and keep both feet on the steps.



### What to look for on the Step Ladder - Visual Check



1. **Safety Handrail** - ensure it is secure and free from damage
2. **Hinge** - check that the hinge fully engages and is free from damage
3. **Step lock** - the step lock must be clean and free from damage so that it fully engages and locks into place
4. **Feet** - rubber feet must be present and free from damage to ensure the ladder does not slip when in use
5. **Uprights** - ensure they are free of damage
6. **Steps/Rungs** - ensure there is no damage and that the rungs are secure. The rubber mats of the steps/rungs must be firmly in place and secure
7. **Stays** - some step ladders have stays which keep the ladder in an open position when engaged. Ensure they are locked fully into position prior to use
8. **Label** - review the label as this may include manufacturers notes regarding use and inspections

### Additional Information

A [Risk Assessment Prompt Sheet for the Use of Kick Stools and Step Ladders](#) at low levels will assist with the risk assessment process for work at heights. More information is available on the [Working at Height](#) webpage.

