

Ladders

As a guide, only use a ladder or stepladder :

- on firm ground or spread the load (eg use a board)
- on level ground - for ladders the maximum safe ground slopes on a suitable surface (unless the manufacturer states otherwise) are as follows: side slope 16o – but the rungs still need to be leveled; back slope 6o
- on clean, solid surface(no oil, moss or leaf litter)and free of loose material(sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination.

The options for securing a ladder are as follows:

- tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied
- where this is not practical, use a safe, unsecured ladder or a ladder supplemented with an effective ladder stability device
- securely wedge the ladder, eg against a wall;
- if none of the above can be achieved, foot the ladder. Footing (bracing feet at bottom) is the last resort and should be avoided, where reasonably practicable, by the use of other access equipment.

You should only use ladders or stepladders:

- where they will not be struck by vehicles, by protecting them with suitable barriers or cones;
- where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows,
- by securing doors where pedestrians are prevented from walking under them or near them by using barriers where ladders can be put up at the correct angle of 75o. To judge the angle use the angle indicator marked on the stiles of some ladders or the 1 in 4 rule (1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- where the restraint devices on stepladders can be fully opened. Any locking devices must also be engaged.

On a ladder or stepladder:

- don't use the top three rungs
- don't use the top two steps of a stepladder, unless a suitable handrail is available on the stepladder
- don't work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power lines, unless the line owner has made them dead or protected with temporary insulation.
- always use a non-conductive ladder or steps for any necessary live electrical work;
- don't rest ladders against weak upper surfaces (eg glazing or plastic gutters).