Safe Use Of Stepladders Training Package

A Students Guide

Welcome to the UAL Safe Use of Step ladders training pack.

This session has two parts;
Part 1
Information about the selection and use of step ladders
Part 2
A test to check you have absorbed the essential information about the safe use of step ladders from Part 1.

When you have completed this training pack you should be able to:
Identify if a step ladder is the right equipment for your task.

Recognise a stepladder that is safe to use and what to do if the step ladder you have is damaged.

Understand how to use a stepladder safely to avoid injury to yourself and others.

Limitations
This session only covers the use of stepladders. If, after completing this session you realise using a stepladder isn't the best option, you need to talk to a member of staff about alternatives.

This session is **not** training in the completion of risk assessments. All tasks should be risk assessed. It might be your responsibility to complete a risk assessment. Talk to a member of staff to decide.

This session concentrates on working indoors. If you are going to be working at height outdoors you should talk to your supervisor about the best way to achieve your goal.

Working at height is any task that means you are working above ground level, or above a hole in the ground or a drop such as a stairwell, and you are likely to be hurt if you fall. This can be as low as 20cm so you are almost definitely going to be working at height at some point during your time at the University.

How you do this and the equipment you use will determine how much risk is involved.

Falling from even a low height can result in serious injury - broken bones and sprains and even death; damage or loss of work and delay.

As you know, a **risk assessment** should be completed for most tasks and must always be completed for any task that will involve any working at height.

Stepladders are available and easy to use. Nearly everyone will have used a stepladder at some point and you probably have one at home. So why all the fuss about using them? **When would a stepladder be the wrong choice for working at height?**

When would a stepladder be the wrong choice for working at height?

Think about it:
Stepladders don’t protect you from falling, they allow you to get high enough to hurt yourself when you land.

Stepladders become unstable quite easily if:
•You lean over away from the centre of the ladder;
•You are carrying something heavy or awkward;
•If you hang something heavy from the frame of the ladder,
•The floor isn’t level;
•The floor is slippery or uneven.

You should always place the ladder facing your work, so a stepladder may put you too far away from your work.

Stepladders shouldn't be used for longer than 30 minutes, they are designed for temporary work, if you need to work at height for longer than 30 minutes you should use something else such as a platform or scaffold tower.

If you only need to work a little bit higher then use a kick step, bench step or short ladder, all of these are better than a tall step ladder.

Don’t use a chair, they are designed to be stable when someone sits on them and doesn’t move much, not for when someone is standing on them.

short ladder
This ladder is only stable if you are facing the work you are about to do. It will tip over if you lean to the side

kick step

bench step

If you need to work above 3 metres, or above a 12 tread ladder you should not use a step ladder, even for quick tasks. The **only** exception is if the risk assessment for the task identifies a step ladder as being the most suitable option for the task and this has been agreed with supervising staff.

If you need to use a cherry picker, tallescope or scaffold tower you will need to arrange with College staff, usually your supervisor or a Technician. This equipment may not be available on your site, it may have to be hired for your work and this is likely to be a cost you will have to meet and may take time to arrange.

Cherry picker

Tallescope

Scaffold tower

What if I want to bring my own equipment on site?

If you need to bring your own equipment onto site you **must** agree with your supervisor and other staff helping you with your work.

You **must** provide any necessary paperwork to prove the equipment has passed all statutory inspections required in law and is the correct equipment to be using. You must also provide appropriate written proof that you and anyone else using the equipment is competent to do so, with the correct training.

What if I want to hire specialist equipment?

Similar to bringing in your own equipment, you **must** have agreement with your supervisor and other staff helping you.

The **hire company** should provide you with proof the equipment has been inspected as necessary and will be able to advise about any further inspections that will be necessary and the training necessary to carry out inspections or use safely.

Do you have to work at height?

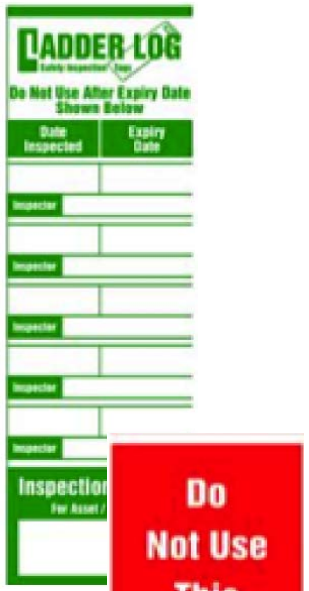
Sometimes you have to work at height to achieve your goal but as much preparation work should be done on the ground as possible.

Working at height should be avoided if at all possible.

How do you know if a step ladder is safe to use?

All UAL stepladders should be suitable for you to use.

They should be thoroughly inspected and given a visual check before being handed out for use. Ladders that are safe will have a green label on them detailing when the ladder is due for inspection. If the label is out of date **do not use** the ladder and report to a member of staff. If the ladder has a red tag similar to the one on the right it is not safe to use, you should let a member of staff know and they will remove it.



Stepladders should have a clear label giving the safe working load and the use classification.

Only class I or Class EN131 ladders should be used in the University.

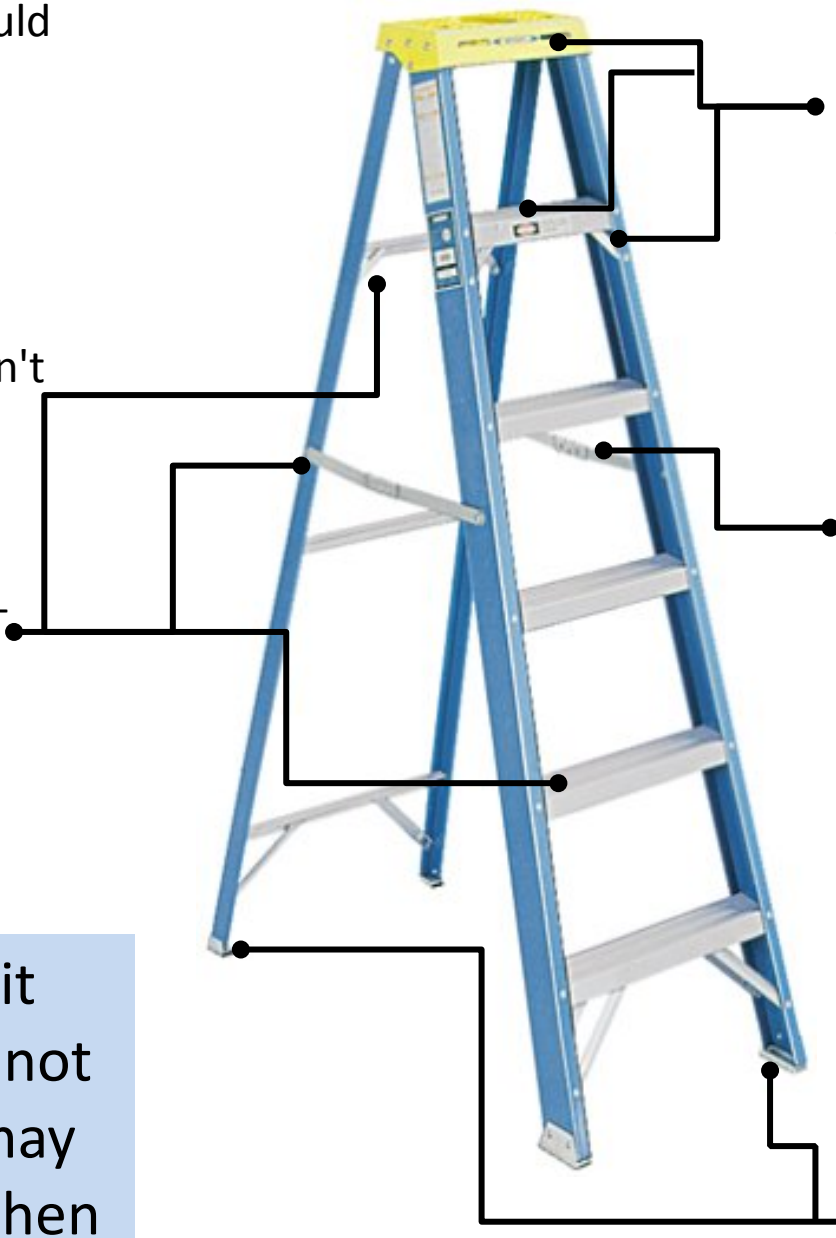
Ladders provided by the University should always safe to use

but .....

You should carry out a visual inspection before use to make sure the ladder hasn't been damaged since being issued.

Check that:

The treads, braces and struts are all securely in-place. All the rivets and connectors should be in place and in good condition.

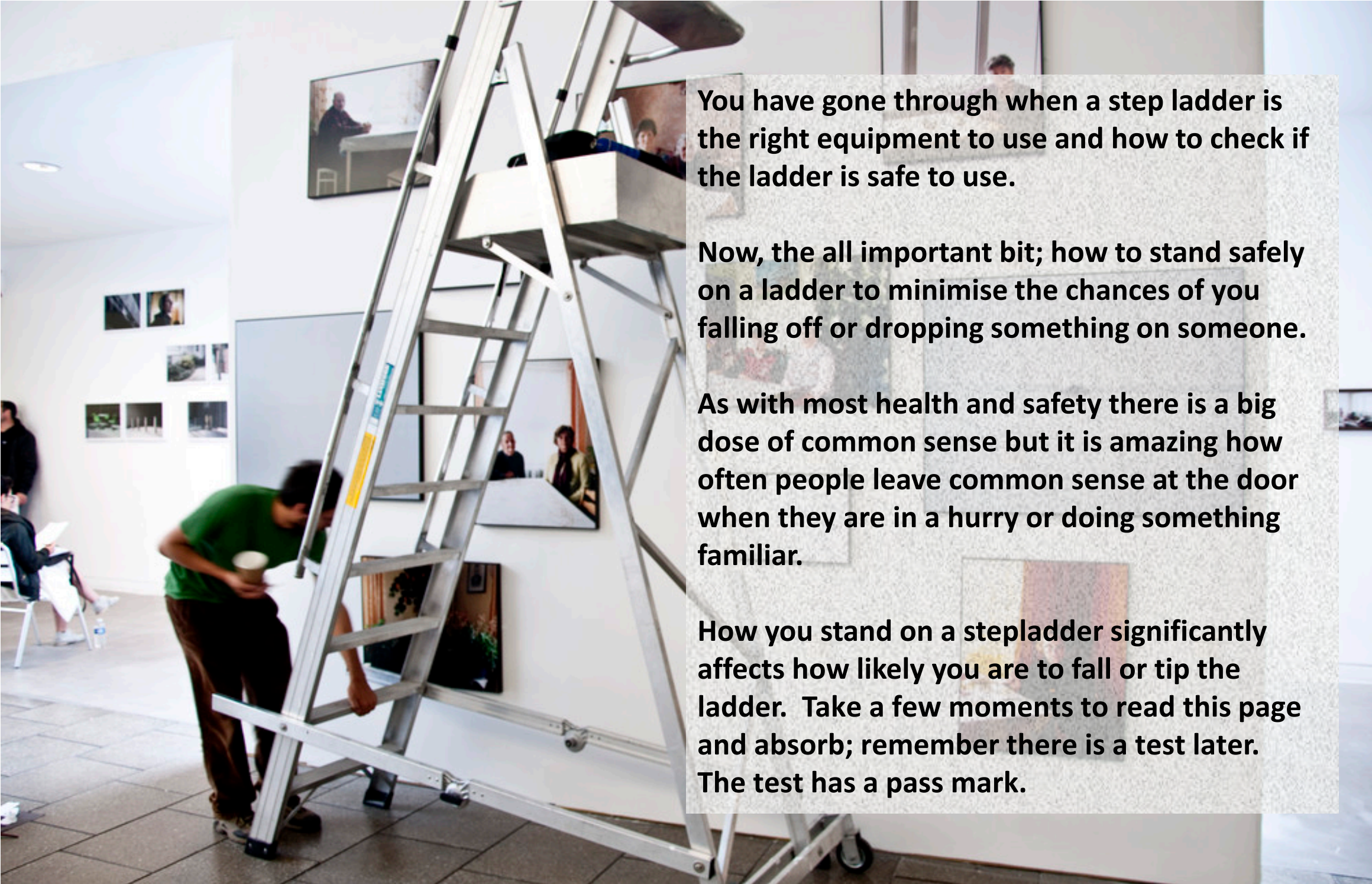


The treads, top and rails and braces are not bent, buckled, dented, cracked or split.

The locking strut should be in good condition, if metal it must lock securely in place and not be bent or split; if it is webbing there should be no signs of damage or wear.

The feet are in place and not damaged. The feet help stop the ladder slipping and provide stability. The feet can be metal or rubber.
Do not use if damaged or missing

The ladder should be stable. If it wobbles at all, the ground may not be level enough or the ladder may be damaged. If it is not stable then the ladder should not be used.



You have gone through when a step ladder is the right equipment to use and how to check if the ladder is safe to use.

Now, the all important bit; how to stand safely on a ladder to minimise the chances of you falling off or dropping something on someone.

As with most health and safety there is a big dose of common sense but it is amazing how often people leave common sense at the door when they are in a hurry or doing something familiar.

How you stand on a stepladder significantly affects how likely you are to fall or tip the ladder. Take a few moments to read this page and absorb; remember there is a test later. The test has a pass mark.

Step ladders are designed to be stable if you stand on them straight, facing your work.

You should always:

Have three points of contact with the ladder.

Stand face on to your work with your body in line with the ladder, not leaning over which will make the ladder unstable.

You shouldn't stand on the top two treads or the top platform of the ladder.

Wear sturdy, flat shoes, not bare feet, mules, sliders or flip flops.

☑ Good footwear but....
☒ Only two points of contact.
☒ Not standing face on and it looks like she might be about to lean toward the wall.
☒ The ladder is also close to the balustrade, if she fell she could fall to the floor below. If there are people working or walking below they could get hit by anything that was dropped, or if they were really unlucky, the person falling from the ladder.

☑ Good footwear.
☑ Three points of contact, both feet and one hand.
☑ Standing in line with the ladder, hopefully not about to lean over which would be bad...very, very bad.

Very, very wrong.
Standing on the top of the ladder in flip flops.

Couldn't get three points of contact without making things much worse.

And, unless she is a member of the Cirque du Soleil how is she going to get down?

Look at the following pictures and decide on the good and bad practice.

(PS. This is not the test...)


POWE
Good Practice?
Bad Practice?
Solution?

Good Practice?

Not a lot of good practice;
The ladder is in good condition,
The floor surface is even and flat.
Flat, sturdy looking footwear.

Bad Practice?

The ladder is not straight on to the window.
The man is not standing straight onto the ladder.
If he was standing on the ladder properly it would not be tall enough.
The ladder must have been unstable when he climbed up and stepped over the top.
He hasn't got three points of contact.
The ladder is very unstable and will be unstable when he climbs down.

Solution?

Using a scaffold platform it can be moved easily, he could cover more of the window without moving the platform as often as he moves the ladder. The equipment he is using and the window foils can be put on the scaffold tower, not having to be carried.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Good Practice?
Bad Practice?
Solution?

Good Practice?

The ladder is in good condition, and has handrails and a good top platform to put things on.
The floor surface is even and flat.
Appropriate footwear on the people working at height.

Bad Practice?

The ladder is not straight on to the work, if it were, the person would be too far away from the wall to paint.
The ladder is not designed to be sat on in this way.
The bench may be strong enough to be stood on but, even if it were, her left foot is not fully on the bench; there is a risk she could step backward, off the bench. Even at this height she could seriously hurt her back or head falling backward on to the hard floor.

Solution?

Using a scaffold platform; it will be very stable and can be adjusted to different heights. Scaffold towers are much wider than the existing bench and have balustrades making it very unlikely anyone will fall off backward.

Good Practice? Bad Practice?

Solution?

Good Practice?

Good footwear.

Bad Practice?

She is balancing on the spreader bar of a stool.
If she stepped backward or over balanced there is little to stop her falling backward and possibly sustaining a serious injury.

Solution?

A short set of ladders or a bench platform. A scaffold tower for the higher painting.

Good Practice?

Hmmmm...

Bad Practice?

Both of the people working at height are standing on chairs. There are no stepladders, bench steps, kick steps visible, there doesn't appear to be any equipment for working at height but this obviously going to be part of the work.

Solution?

Provide stepladders, bench steps, kick steps as appropriate for the work being undertaken.