

Ladders should only be used when a safer option is not reasonably available and only for tasks that are **short in duration** and **low in physical demand**. Consider the following aspects when choosing a ladder:

- the actions involved in the task (including reach, use of tools, equipment, objects)
- the duration of the task (how long and how frequent the task is performed)
- ladder stability and height (are there unstable surfaces, is the ladder height enough to do the job safely)
- physical surroundings and weather conditions.
- The correct type of ladder to suit the job –
 - **order picker ladder** is the **most stable** with fall protection
 - **platform ladders** are portable with **moderate stability**
 - **a-frame, straight, single, step or extension ladders** – **least stable**, use only for short tasks and requires three points of contact when using it, correct material type metal, fibreglass, etc.

Positioning a Ladder for access/egress

Considerations for all ladders:

- ensure the ladder is industrially rated (*i.e.* **120kg and above, AS1892 label**)
- check the condition of the ladder before each use – no missing parts, not warped, corroded, cracked, splintered or rusted.
- never use ladders in thunderstorms, rain, windy or wet conditions.
- make sure there are no power lines or exposed wires near the ladder.

To position a ladder safely:

- use a 1:4 angle (1m out for every 4m up)
- place on a stable, level surface
- extend the ladder at least 1 metre above the landing
- secure both top and bottom of the ladder
- lock or block any doors if nearby
- use barricades or warning signs if near pedestrian or vehicle traffic.

Do not position ladders:

- in access ways or doorways without barriers
- on scaffolds or platforms for extra height
- next to high-traffic areas, unless the work is barricaded.

To prevent slipping and toppling of ladders:

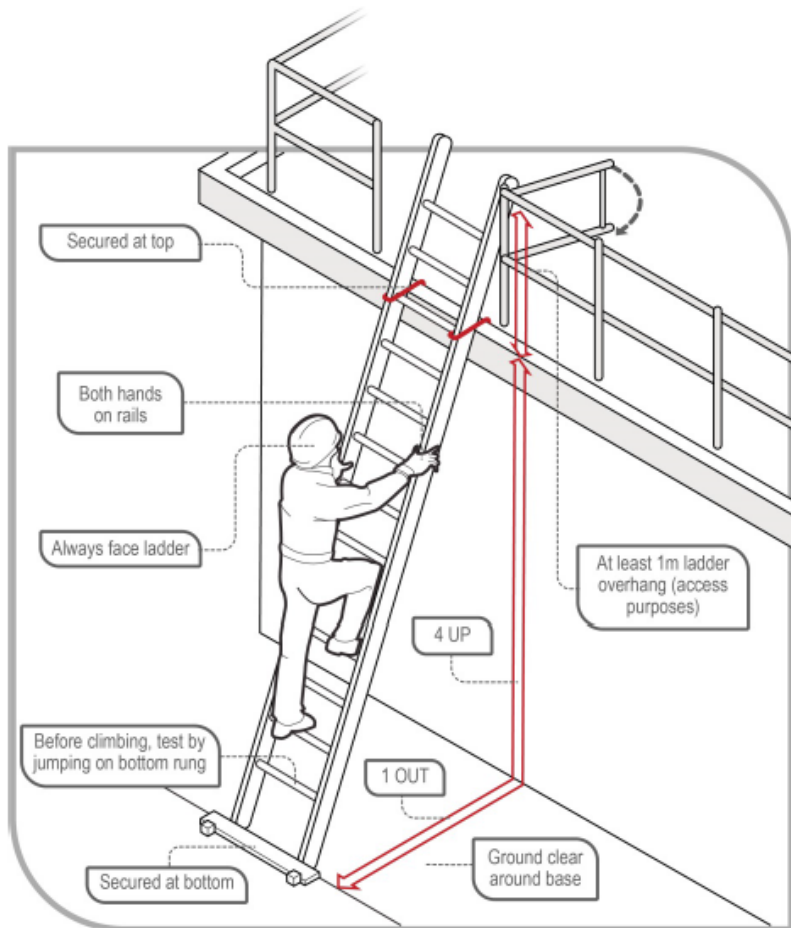
- ensure that the ladder has non-slip feet
- check the surface the ladder is being set up on – does it require extra measures to ensure safe ladder use?

- set up step ladders in the fully open position (and lock ladder 'arms' in place)
- have a second person 'foot' or stabilise the ladder for added stability.

Using an A Frame Ladder Safely

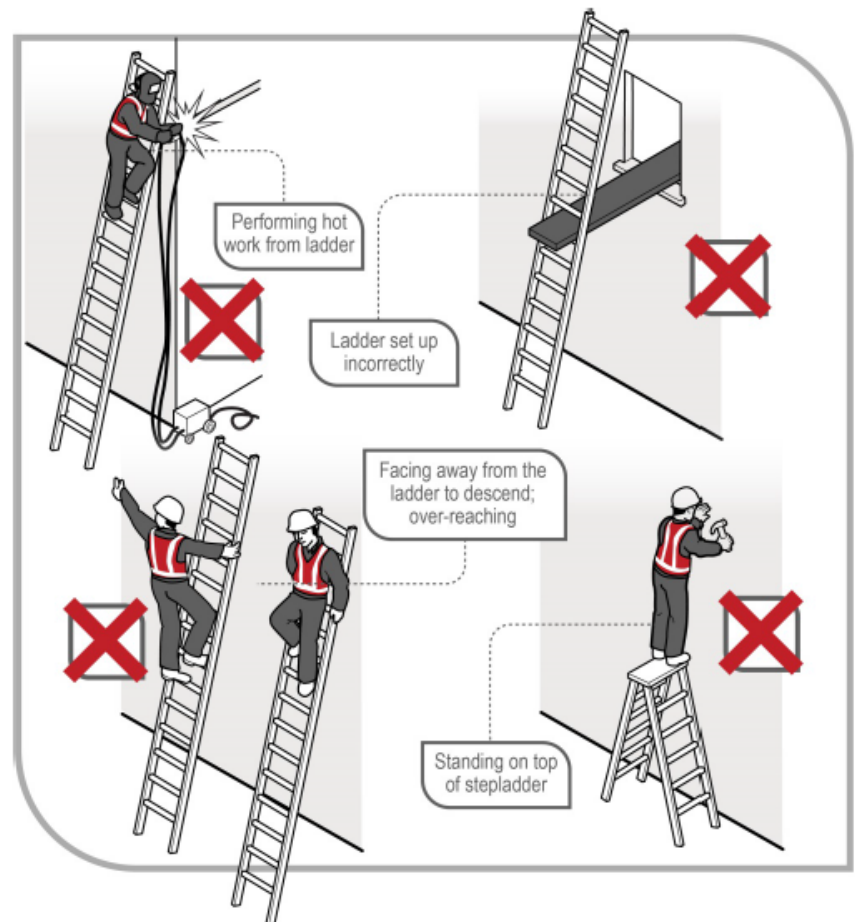
When using a ladder:

- only one person should be on a ladder at any given time
- always maintain three points of contact with the ladder
- always face the ladder when climbing or descending
- do not carry any materials when climbing or descending
- keep your body centred between the sides of the ladder
- do not lean sideways or over-reach
- do not straddle the ladder
- do not stand above the tread or rung on the ladder indicated as the maximum safe working height
- only conduct light work from a ladder
- do not use tools that require two hands or a high degree of leverage
- consider whether a platform ladder is a safer option.



*Managing Risk of Falls at Workplaces Code of Practice, Figure 30 – Example of **correct** ladder use*

*Managing Risk of Falls at Workplaces Code of Practice, Figure 31 – Example of **unsafe** ladder use*



Information courtesy of:

- SafeWork SA – [Ladders Factsheet](#)
- Safe Work SA – Ladders - <https://www.safework.sa.gov.au/workplaces/plant-tools-and-vehicles/ladders>
- [Managing the risk of falls in the workplace – Code of Practice](#)