

Safety and health alert

01/05 Failure of domestic step ladder

Incident

In November 2004 a worker received injuries while on a domestic ladder. The damaged ladder was set up on the road when it collapsed while the worker was installing new guttering to a shop awning.

Factors to consider

- The ladder type was not appropriate to the task as it was a domestic ladder.
- The ladder was not on level ground.
- The ladder was damaged, with alterations to the fixing of the treads to the stiles.

Recommendations

1. Ladder type should be appropriate to the task and comply with Australian/New Zealand Standard 1892.
2. Users should follow the manufacturer's recommendation on safe use.
3. Ladders should only be used on firm, stable and level ground.
4. Before using a ladder, it should be inspected for faults such as broken rungs, rails and footing.
5. Damaged ladders should not be used.
6. Ladders should be secured against displacement (ie slipping or sliding).
7. Only light duty and short duration work should be undertaken while on a ladder, where three points of contact can be maintained and tools can be operated safely with one hand.

Further information

- Standards Australia – Australian/New Zealand AS/NZS 1892 series.
- Code of Practice – Prevention of Falls at Workplaces 2004.
- Regulation 3.26 Portable Ladders – Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996.

For further information on this summary please contact Inspector Glen Guest on (08) 9327 8777 or access the WorkSafe website at www.docep.wa.gov.au.

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