

Date: 23/01/20

Fall from Height – Works from a Ladder

What happened / what has changed?

An incident occurred where a worker has fallen from height when the ladder he was attempting to climb has slipped at the base causing it to collapse beneath him. The worker stated he was on the 3rd or 4th rung of the ladder at the time.

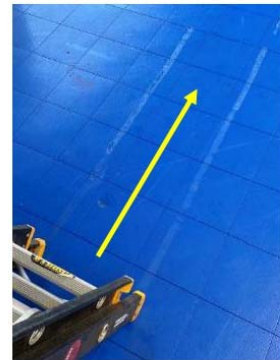
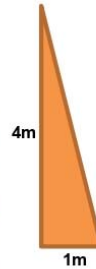
The worker has landed awkwardly on his left wrist, which has resulted in a fracture which will require surgery.



Incident scene post incident. The base of ladder has slipped and kicked out beneath worker.



Incident scene re-enacted. Note: Ladder could not be installed at required 4:1 slope due to its length.



View showing drag marks from rubber feet of ladder.

Why did it happen / why the change?

- The crew did have an alternative ladder (platform ladder) on site, but the injured worker made the decision to use the extension ladder on this occasion.
- The ladder involved in the incident was very good condition, however it was too long for the task.
- The flooring in the area was a high-density foam / plastic matting (gym mats) used for training. The flooring was not slippery when dry but had a slightly glossy finish which would become slippery with any contaminant, dirt / sand or water.
- The temperature inside the building was approximately 34 C with high humidity. The worker reported sweating heavily which may have caused moisture to be present on the flooring below the ladder.

Required Action:

- Always use the right tool for the job – if a ladder is too short or too long, the job needs to be reassessed, or put on hold until the right equipment is available.
- Wherever possible, work from ladders should be avoided. Consider other access methods such as scaffold, EWP's or temporary work platforms (as appropriate). Also, platform ladders are preferred over step (a-frame) or extension ladders.
- When working from an extension or straight ladder, ensure that the ladder is secured from movement (both top and bottom), and footed by another worker while setting up tie straps.

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Discuss at the start of the next shift and display on notice boards – removal date 30/04/2020.