

TOOLBOX TALK – ‘*Ladders & Safe Working at Height’*

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| **Contributor:** **Michael Murphy, Laois Scaffolding Hire Ltd** |
| *“Steps, or step ladders are one of the most used, and abused, pieces of equipment on a construction site. When abused and misused, they have enormous potential to cause accidents and injuries. Falling from a height is a major cause of fatalities in the construction industry. More than half of falls from a height of over 2 metres result in death or a life changing injury. Any fall from a height has the potential to cause serious life changing injuries.**Most falls that result in serious injuries are from a relatively short distance 2-3 metres. Fall prevention is much better than dealing with the consequences of a fall from height.**Remember it’s not the fall, it’s the sudden stop that causes the damage”.* (Michael Murphy, Head of Health and Safety, Laois Scaffolding Hire Ltd.) |
| **Contributor’s Shared Advice:** |
| * Plan and organise the work schedule
* Risk Assess all work at height, before attempting to start work
* Select the most appropriate access equipment
* Ladders are essentially a means of access/egress and should only be used as working platforms for very short duration tasks, where alternative platforms would be impracticable, and where such tasks can be carried out safely using a ladder
* Only professional ladders should be used,
* All ladders must be certified and should have a record of inspection
* All ladders should be in good condition
* Ladders must be suitable for the work being undertaken and suitably secured (preferably tied off at the top using both stiles to prevent both sideways slip and rotation)
* All operatives must be aware of the hazards and risks involved in the work they are undertaking
* Training in working at height equipment must be provided
* Always carry out visual check of working at height equipment prior to use. Report any defects immediately
* Consider weather conditions – wet, windy and/or icy conditions can have a serious impact on safety at height
* Beware of overhead obstructions, especially overhead power lines (metal ladders/metal reinforcements).

**When using ladders:*** Always stand ladders on a firm base.
* Never use rungs as a support for planks, or rest rungs on planks
* Remove excessive mud, grease, etc. from footwear prior to climbing/descending a ladder
* Always use both hands to climb/descend, and face the ladder, 3 points of contact
* Do not carry loads up ladders – use hoists or alternatives
* Never overreach from ladders – get down and move them.

**Roof work:*** All roof work needs to be properly risk assessed before starting
* If roof work is involved identify any fragile areas and/or openings and implement suitable protective precautions
* Use crawling boards/roof ladders where applicable.
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