

METHOD STATEMENT: MS028a
Task description: Safe use of a ladder (Leaning ladders, telescopic ladders and step ladders)

Equipment
Ladder (consider appropriate size for job)
Stability device
Warning signs
Cleaning equipment (see relevant risk assessment for task being carried out)
PPE
Hard hat
Gloves (with grip)
Safety footwear (with grip)
High visibility clothing
Safety (when using any ladder)
Only carry light materials and tools – read the manufacturer’s labels on the ladder and assess the risks
Don’t overreach – make sure your belt buckle (or navel) stays within the stiles
Stepladders - where access does not permit you to position the ladder facing the work, the ladder should be footed by a colleague to assist with stability (i.e cleaning the tops of deeper ledges i.e high level fridges/ freezers)
Make sure the ladder is long enough or high enough for the task
Don’t overload the ladder – consider your weight and the equipment or materials you are carrying before working at height
Check the pictogram or label on the ladder for any advisory information
Don’t stand ladders on movable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, excavator buckets, vans or mobile elevating work platforms
Always grip the ladder and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending – don’t slide down the stiles
Avoid holding items when climbing (consider using a tool belt or asking a colleague to pass the pole to you)
Maintain three points of contact when climbing and wherever possible at the work position.
Where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (eg to hold squeegee or blade etc), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or mitigate the consequences if one happened
When using a leaning ladder or telescopic ladder
To help make sure the ladder angle is at the safest position to work from- you should use the 1-in-4 rule. This is where the ladder should be one space or unit of measurement out for every four spaces or units up (a 75° angle)
Don’t try to move or extend the ladder while standing on the rungs
Don’t work off the top three rungs. Try to make sure that the ladder extends at least 1 metre or three rungs above where you are working
Don’t work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line, unless it has been made dead or it is protected with insulation. Use a non-conductive ladder (eg fibreglass or timber) for any electrical work
Secure the ladder (eg by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point (ie do not rest it against weak upper surfaces such as glazing or plastic gutters)
Consider using an effective stability device (a device which, if used correctly, prevents the ladder from slipping, some types of ladders come with these)
Procedure

Assemble cleaning equipment
Make assessment of the cleaning task, and only use ladders where no other option working from ground can be achieved
Check the ground condition for good footing (i.e algae/ moss causing slippery flooring, uneven flooring)
Put out warning signs
Site ladder on a firm base. Locate stability device or ensure ladder is footed.
Wet sponge/ cloth or applicator with water and detergent and leave bucket in a safe place
Climb ladder to access work area ensuring that the ladder is a suitable length to maintain a hand hold.
Where the use of a pole/ extending brush is required, climb the ladder and ask a colleague to pass the equipment to you when you are stable and in a good working position, maintaining as many points of contact with the ladder.
Proceed to clean work area making sure not to overstretch, and maintaining 3 points of contact to the ladder at all times
Egress from the ladder and reposition the ladder as required to complete the task.
Remove warning sign