



OH&S TIP SHEET

Health and Safety in Early Childhood Services

Platform steps and ladders

The following general guidance is provided when using platform steps and ladders, where there is no risk of 'fall hazard' in the tasks undertaken by employees.



- The employer should provide, or pass as suitable, existing platform ladders for use in accessing higher shelves as 'endorsed platform ladders'. The employer should also attach a secure laminated sign showing this ladder is endorsed and include instructions on safe use.
- If possible, ladders that can access heights of greater than 2 metres working height at the service should not be kept on the premises.
- All ladders, including those that can only access to 2 metres working height, should be stored in a secure location, away from possible access by children, intruders and other unauthorised persons.

Where ladder use is authorised by the employer, adopt the following precautions:

- examine ladders for defects and damage before use
- ladders should be adequately supported at the base

- ladder safety features such as hook-in-place or locking mechanisms should be used
- set the ladder at a slope of 4 in 1 – ladders must be angled one out and four up
- ladders should extend at least 1 metre above the access level
- ladders should be firmly secured or tied off or held firmly by another person
- the ties should be attached to the stile/uprights of the ladder and not the rungs
- a ladder should not be 'walked' by the person standing on the ladder
- one person on a ladder at a time with three body limbs on the ladder at all times (sometimes referred to as 'three-point contact')
- do not climb higher than the second rung from the top of the ladder

- only work on a job within easy arm's reach from the ladder
- ladders (other than trestle ladders) should not be used to support planks as a work platform
- metal ladders, or wire reinforced ladders, must not be used where electrical hazards exist
- do not carry anything in your hands when climbing or descending (consider the use of tool pouches)
- do not place ladders in vehicle or pedestrian traffic areas
- long and heavy ladders (greater than 20 kilograms) should be handled by at least two people
- stepladders should only be used in the fully open position
- wear slip-resistant footwear when using ladders
- clean off footwear and ladder rungs before using the ladder.