

6.0 SAFETY IN THE USE OF LADDERS AND STAIRS

6.1. GENERAL ASPECTS OF SAFETY RELATED TO USE OF LADDERS

- a. Every ladder or step-ladder used in building or other construction work shall be of good construction, made of sound material and of adequate strength for the purpose for which such ladder or step-ladder is used;
- b. When a ladder is used as a means of communication, such ladder shall be lashed to a fixed structure so that while working on such ladder it does not slip;
- c. A ladder or step ladder shall not stand on loose bricks or other loose packing and have a level and firm footing;
- d. No ladder shall be used which has a missing or defective rungs or rungs, which depend for support solely on nails, spikes or other similar fixing.

6.2. MATERIALS FOR LADDERS

- a. Shall be constructed with upright of adequate strength and are made of straight-grained wood, free from defects and having the grain of such wood running length wise;
- b. Shall have rungs made of straight-grained wood free for defects and mortised or securely notched into the upright, reinforcing metal ties, if wedges shall not secure the tenors of such ladders;
- c. Where it is required, in case of use of fixed ladders, sufficient foot-hold and hand-hold shall be provided for use by the building worker;
- d. Every ladder shall be -
 - i. Secured so as to prevent undue swaying;
 - ii. Equally and properly supported on each of its upright;
 - iii. So used as not to cause undue sagging; and
 - iv. Placed as nearly as possible at an inclination of four in one;
- e. The use of all ladders and stepladders shall conform to the approved standards;
- f. Wooden ladders shall be constructed with uprights of adequate strength as well as rungs made of wood free from visible defects and having the grains of the wood in the ladders running lengthwise and rungs mortised or rebuted into the uprights;
- g. Uprights and rungs of metal ladders shall have a cross-section adequate to prevent dangerous deflection, shall be equal and not less than 25 cm or more than 35 cm;
- h. Rungs of metal ladders shall be kept clean so as to prevent them from becoming slippery;
- i. Portable ladders shall not exceed 9 m in length;
- j. Every ladder or run of ladders rising to a height exceeding 9 m shall be provided with an intermediate landing, providing further that the intervals between landings shall not exceed 9 m. The landings shall be of suitable size and protected by railings;
- k. Defective ladders that cannot be satisfactorily repaired shall be tagged Not Fit For Use and destroyed;
- l. Wooden ladders shall not be painted, but oiled or covered with clean varnish or other transparent preservatives;
- m. Metal ladders shall be protected against corrosion by being coated with rust-proof paint or by other means unless they are made of non-corrosive metals;

- n. Every ladder shall rise at least 1 m above the highest point to be reached and have one of the uprights continued to that height to serve as a hand-rail at the top;
- o. Ladders shall not stand on loose bricks or other loose packing but have a level and firm footing so that they are equally supported on each upright;
- p. Every ladder shall be securely fixed so that it cannot move from its top and bottom points of rest and if it cannot be secured at the top, it shall be securely fastened at the base and if fastening at the top is also impracticable, it shall have a man stationed at the foot holding the end to prevent it from slipping;
- q. Where a run of two or more ladders connects different floors, the ladders shall be staggered and a protective landing with the smallest practicable opening shall be provided at each floor;
- r. A ladder having only one upright or a missing or dangerously defective rung shall not be used;
- s. When a ladder is placed in position, the distance between the foot of a ladder and the base of the structure against which it rests shall be about one-quarter of its length;
- t. Workers using ladders shall leave at least one hand free for climbing up and down, face the ladder, avoid wearing slippery footwear and avoid carrying heavy or bulky loads;
- u. A ladder shall not be placed in front of a door that opens towards it unless the door is fastened or locked or guarded;
- v. A ladder shall not be placed against a window frame unless the ladder is fitted with a board at the top so that the applied load is safely distributed over the frame;
- w. Metal ladders shall not be used in the vicinity of live electrical equipment;
- x. Adequate means shall be provided to prevent displacement of the ladder set up in public thoroughfare or where persons, vehicles etc. may accidentally collide with it.

6.3. PORTABLE STEPLADDERS

- a. The length of portable stepladders shall not exceed 6 m and their back legs shall be adequately braced;
- b. Stepladders exceeding 1.5 m in length shall have two or more cross-ties;
- c. The spread between the front and back legs shall be restricted by means of hinged metal flat bars or high-grade fibre or other effective means;
- d. When in the open position, treads of stepladders shall be horizontal.

6.4. PORTABLE TRESTLE LADDERS

- a. The height of the trestle ladders shall not exceed 5.5 m;
- b. The spread between the front and back legs shall be restricted by means of hinged metal flat bars or high-grade fibre or other effective means;
- c. The front and back legs shall be joined at the top by bolted steel hinges of adequate dimensions or other effective means;
- d. Both legs of trestle ladders shall be equipped with sufficient number of steel crossties.

6.5. EXTENSION LADDERS

- a. The length of extension ladders shall not exceed 15 m;
- b. Extension ladders shall be equipped with an effective lock and guide brackets by which the ladder can be extended, retracted or locked in any position;

- c. The rungs of overlapping sections shall coincide so as to form double treads and shall be equipped with one or more extension ropes;
- d. Extension ropes shall be securely anchored and run over suitable pulleys.

6.6 MECHANICAL LADDERS

- a. Mechanical ladder is that ladder, which is a mechanically extendable ladder, mounted on a wheeled frame;
- b. Mechanical ladder shall be equipped with guard-rails and toe-boards and a cage of heavy-gauge steel mesh;
- c. If mechanical ladder has no railed platform or cage, workers using it shall be secured by suitable safety belt;
- d. Mechanical ladders shall not be moved, while a person is on them, unless they have specially designed to ensure that perfect stability is maintained during movement.

6.7. FIXED LADDERS

- a. Uprights of fixed ladders shall be at least 40 cm and shall be set an angle of 15° to the vertical;
- b. Clearance at the back of the rungs shall be at least 15 cm and no obstruction within 75 cm of the face of the ladder;
- c. There shall be at least 7.5 cm clearance between the ladder and the nearest fixed object;
- d. When it is necessary for a ladder to pass closely through a hole in a platform or a floor, the edges of the hole shall be padded so as to prevent injury to the users;
- e. The length of the runs of fixed ladder shall not exceed 9 m;
- f. Landing platform shall be provided for each 9 m or fraction thereof;
- g. As far as practicable, runs shall be staggered;
- h. Runs from which a person could fall from more than 6 m shall be enclosed in a cage of heavy-gauge mesh or hoops;
- i. Fixed ladders shall be firmly bolted or welded in position.

6.8. STAIRS

- a. Stairs shall be of adequate strength to withstand safely the loads that they will have to carry;
- b. Stairs used for the purpose of construction work shall have a clear width of at least 60 cm;
- c. Stairs made of perforated material shall not have openings exceeding 1.2 cm in width;
- d. No step of a stairway shall depend for its support solely on nails, spikes, screws or other similar fixing;
- e. No stairway with missing or dangerously defective steps shall be used;
- f. Every stairway that is at an angle of less than 30° from the vertical shall be provided with a secure handhold at the top landing place, either by extending one upright for at least 1 m or by other effective means;
- g. Movable and removable stairs shall be adequately secured in the position of use;
- h. In all building structures permanent stairs shall be constructed as soon as practicable;
- i. When work on a building has progressed to a height of more than 18 m above the ground and it has not been practical to construct the permanent stairs, sufficient number of stairs shall be provided to ensure safe access to the working levels.