**Ladder Safety**

**Workplace Ladder Safety Requirements**

The following information is intended to provide a general overview of the various Australian legal requirements associated with ladder use in the workplace.

While [ladder safety](http://www.lockjawladdergrip.com.au/) regulations vary between States and Territories consistent themes can be identified amongst these differing jurisdictions regarding ladder safety.

In particular:

* Ladder safety obligations generally attach to a broad range of individuals and corporate entities including employers, employees, contractors and the self-employed;
* Height safety remains a key area of concern for safety authorities; Adequate training and equipment needs to be provided to workers to minimise height elated accidents;
* Guidelines or Codes of Practice are often utilised to recommend ‘minimum’ ladder safety requirements needed to meet legal obligations under relevant legislation; and
* On a more specific note, there is a consistent requirement for single or extension ladders to be secured at the workplace.

**Queensland Ladder Safety Requirements**

On 1 September 2008, the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 2008 replaced the previous Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997.

The new regulation contains a range of provisions aimed at promoting ladder safety. In particular, section 326 of the regulation requires that a "relevant person\*" undertaking construction work must not use, or allow another person to use either a single or extension ladder, **unless the ladder is secured at or near the top or bottom to prevent it moving.**

\*A person who conducts a business or undertaking is considered a ‘relevant person’ and can include:

* employers
* self-employed people
* volunteer organisations

**Victorian Ladder Safety Requirements**

Ladder safety in Victoria is primarily regulated by:

* Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004; and
* Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007.

Section 3.3.4 of the regulation establishes a hierarchical approach to height risks with ladder use only being undertaken if other more secure forms or safety apparatus are inappropriate for the circumstances.

In the event a ladder is to be used, section 3.3.5 of the Regulation requires that:

An employer must ensure that a fixed or portable ladder used in accordance with regulation 3.3.4 to control the risk of a fall—

* (a) is fit for the purpose; and
* (b) is appropriate for the duration of the task; and
* **(c) is set up in a correct manner.**

A Worksafe Victoria publication titled Prevention of Falls – Ladders (First Edition June 2005) outlines that in order to set up a ladder correctly **single and extension ladders should be secured at both the top and the bottom.**

**NSW Ladder Safety Requirements**

Workplace health and safety requirements in NSW are governed by:

* Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000; and
* Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001.

Code of Practice: Safe Work on Roofs, Part 2 – Residential Buildings 2004 requires that if a ladder is used for access (to a residential building) "the ladder should have non-slip feet and be secured against movement".

It is noted that a person or company cannot be prosecuted only because of a failure to comply with an approved industry code of practice. However, failure to observe a relevant approved industry code of practice can be used as evidence that a person or company has contravened or failed to comply with the provisions of the safety Act or Regulation.

**Western Australia Ladder Safety Requirements**

Ladder safety in Western Australia is governed by:

* Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984; and
* Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996.

In particular section 3.26 of the regulation requires that (amongst other things) if, at a workplace, a person uses either a single or extension ladder then the person must ensure that:

***"the ladder is secured into position so as to prevent slipping or sideways movement"****.*

The Code of Practice titled Prevention of Falls at the Workplaces 2004 reiterates provisions in the regulation and outlines that portable ladders should be:

***"secured against displacement (i.e. slipping or sliding) and/or there is another person holding the base of the ladder"****.*

**South Australia Ladder Safety Requirements**

**Ladder safety** requirements in South Australia are governed by:

* Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Act 1986; and
* Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare Regulation 1995.

The Act places significant obligations on Employers and Employees (including self-employed persons) to provide a safe work environment.

In particular, section 2.13.1 (10)(d) of the Regulation requires that:

(d) if a portable single ladder or extension ladder is used, the ladder must be—

(i) placed so that the horizontal distance between the top support point of the ladder and the foot of the ladder is approximately one quarter of the supported length of the ladder; and

(ii) located on a firm footing and effectively secured in position to prevent slipping and sideways movement.

The requirement to secure to top of ladders is further reflected in the Safework SA publication titled Safeguards – Ladders (Re-Issued August 2007). This guideline outlines that before starting work with a ladder "***the top and bottom of the ladder should be secured against displacement".***

**Tasmania Ladder Safety Requirements**

[ladder safety](http://www.lockjawladdergrip.com.au/) in Tasmania is governed by the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995 and the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1998.

A guideline titled Construction Industry: A Guide to Occupational Health and Safety as published by Work Cover Tasmania provides additional direction on "**minimum safety standards that must be complied with**".

The guideline requires that, amongst other things, the top of a ladder "**shall be secured or restrained against possible movement**".

The Act places responsibilities on a range of parties to ensure safety requirements are maintained including:

* Employers;
* Principals; and
* Workers.

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