

Fixed Ladder Requirements: Emergency Escape vs. Occasional Work Access - Comparison

Executive Summary

Fixed ladders in UK premises are subject to **substantially different legal requirements** depending on their use:

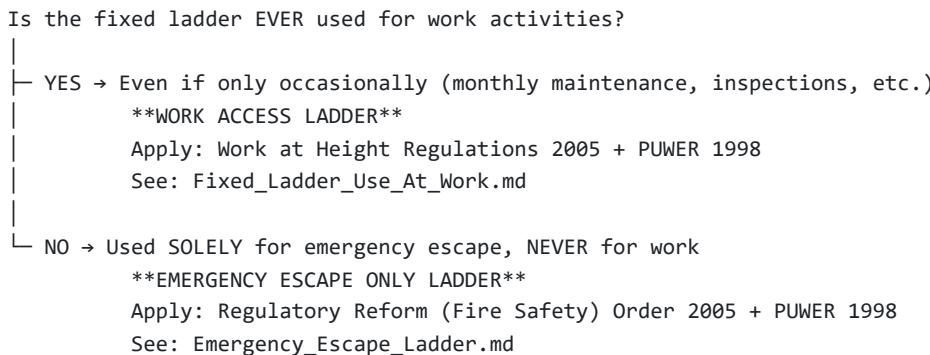
- **Emergency Escape Only** (never used for work) - Governed primarily by **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**
- **Occasional Work Access** (used for work activities) - Governed primarily by **Work at Height Regulations 2005**

Critical Determination: A ladder used for work access even occasionally (e.g., monthly inspections, maintenance checks) is a **work access ladder** and must meet the more stringent WAHR requirements, NOT the emergency-only requirements.

Key Difference: Work access ladders have **MORE STRINGENT** inspection, training, and justification requirements, but emergency-only ladders have **UNIQUE** fire safety requirements (signage, emergency lighting, accessibility).

1. DETERMINING WHICH REQUIREMENTS APPLY

Decision Tree



Common Scenarios

Scenario	Classification	Requirements Apply
Ladder to plant room, accessed monthly for equipment checks	WORK ACCESS	WAHR 2005 (more stringent)
Ladder to roof, accessed quarterly for inspection	WORK ACCESS	WAHR 2005 (more stringent)
Ladder in office building, designated emergency escape, never used	EMERGENCY ONLY	Fire Safety Order 2005
Ladder in warehouse, marked "emergency only" but occasionally used for maintenance	WORK ACCESS	WAHR 2005 (designation doesn't override actual use)
Ladder to equipment platform, accessed 5 times/day for brief checks	WORK ACCESS	WAHR 2005 (more stringent)
Ladder in plant room providing secondary escape route, never accessed for work (equipment accessed by stairs)	EMERGENCY ONLY	Fire Safety Order 2005

Important: Actual use determines classification, NOT signage or intention. If ladder is used for work, WAHR applies.

2. PRIMARY LEGISLATION COMPARISON

Aspect	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Primary Legislation	Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Work at Height Regulations 2005
Secondary Legislation	PUWER 1998 (maintenance only)	PUWER 1998 (full requirements)
Building Regulations	Approved Document B (Fire Safety)	Approved Document K (Protection from falling)
Responsible Authority	Fire and Rescue Service	Health and Safety Executive (HSE)
Enforcement Focus	Fire safety compliance, means of escape adequacy	Work at height risk management, fall prevention

Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 - Emergency Escape

Key Articles:

- **Article 14:** Emergency routes and exits must be kept clear, adequate in number/size, lead directly to safety
- **Article 17:** Sustained program of maintenance and inspection

Focus: Ensuring escape routes remain available and functional for emergency use.

Source: RRF(SO) 2005

Work at Height Regulations 2005 - Work Access

Key Regulations:

- **Regulation 4:** Work must be properly planned, supervised, carried out safely
- **Regulation 6:** Avoid work at height where possible; where necessary, prevent falls
- **Schedule 6:** Specific requirements for ladders (justification, design, inspection)

Focus: Protecting workers from falls during work activities.

Source: [WAHR 2005](#)

3. DETAILED REQUIREMENTS COMPARISON

Risk Assessment

Requirement	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Risk Assessment Type	Fire risk assessment under RRF(SO) Art 9	Work at height risk assessment under WAHR Reg 6
Assessment Focus	Adequacy as means of escape, accessibility, suitability for occupants	Fall risks, work activity hazards, control measures
Justification Required	Must be suitable under Approved Document B s.3.28 (areas not normally occupied, conventional stair impractical, not for public)	MANDATORY justification why ladder used instead of safer alternatives (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 1) - must document short duration/low risk
Documentation	Part of overall fire risk assessment	Specific documented risk assessment for ladder work activities
Review Frequency	Annually or after significant changes	Annually or after significant changes

Key Difference: Work access ladders require **explicit justification** why ladder is used rather than fixed staircase, MEWP, or scaffolding. Emergency ladders must only meet suitability criteria for escape purposes.

Design and Safety Features

Feature	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Design Standards	BS 4211:2005+A1:2008 (recommended but not legally mandated)	BS 4211:2005+A1:2008 or BS EN ISO 14122-4:2016 (referenced in WAHR)
Safety Cages/Hoops (>2.4m)	Recommended but NOT legally required	LEGALLY REQUIRED OR fall arrest system (WAHR Schedule 6)
Fall Arrest Systems	Not practical (emergency users won't don harnesses)	Required if no safety cage (but impractical for frequent brief access)
Rest Platforms (>9m)	Recommended for accessibility	Required "where reasonably practicable" (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 4)
Handholds at Top	Recommended	Legally required - must extend 1m above landing OR suitable handhold (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 5)
Rung Spacing	225-300mm (BS 4211 guidance)	225-300mm (WAHR Schedule 6 references BS standards)
Width Between Stringers	300mm minimum (BS 4211 guidance)	300mm minimum (WAHR compliance)
Load Capacity	1.5kN per rung, 3kN per stile (BS 4211)	1.5kN per rung, 3kN per stile (BS 4211/WAHR)

Key Difference: Safety cages/hoops are **legally mandatory** for work access ladders over 2.4m (WAHR Schedule 6), but only **recommended best practice** for emergency-only ladders.

Inspection Requirements

Inspection Type	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Pre-Use Checks	Not applicable (ladder not used in normal operations)	MANDATORY - before EACH use by user (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 3)
Monthly Visual Checks	Recommended (demonstrates RRF(SO) compliance)	Not legally required but good practice
Detailed Inspections	12 months by competent person (PUWER Reg 6)	6-12 months by competent person depending on use intensity/environment (PUWER Reg 6)
Structural Engineer Survey	Every 5 years recommended (BS 8210:2020 s.17.1.4)	Not standard requirement unless specific concerns
Post-Event Inspections	After any exceptional circumstances (PUWER Reg 6(3))	After any exceptional circumstances (PUWER Reg 6(3))
Inspection Records	MANDATORY - must be kept (PUWER + RRF(SO))	MANDATORY - must be kept until next inspection (PUWER Reg 6)

Key Differences:

1. **Pre-use checks:** MANDATORY for work ladders before each use; not applicable for emergency-only
2. **Detailed inspection frequency:** Work ladders need MORE FREQUENT inspections (6-12 monthly vs. 12 monthly) due to wear from regular use
3. **Structural surveys:** Emergency ladders need 5-yearly structural engineer surveys (best practice under BS 8210:2020); work ladders do not have this requirement

Why the Difference? Emergency-only ladders experience less wear/tear (no regular use), so less frequent detailed inspections suffice. However, structural failure during emergency would be catastrophic, hence 5-yearly engineer surveys. Work ladders have higher wear but failures are discovered through frequent use and pre-use checks.

Training and User Competence

Requirement	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
User Training	NOT REQUIRED - occupants use ladder in emergency without training	MANDATORY - all users must receive training (PUWER Reg 9)
Training Content	N/A	Methods of use, risks, precautions, three points of contact, pre-use checks
Supervision	N/A	Required until users competent (PUWER Reg 9)
Competence Assessment	N/A	Users must be assessed as competent before unsupervised use
Training Records	N/A	MANDATORY - must maintain records (names, dates, content)
Refresher Training	N/A	When changes occur or unsafe practices observed (recommended annually)
Three Points of Contact	Does NOT apply in emergency situations	MANDATORY - must be maintained at all times during work use (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 3)

Key Difference: Work access requires **comprehensive mandatory training** for all users; emergency-only requires **no user training** (occupants use ladder in emergency regardless of training).

Why the Difference? In emergencies, occupants will use whatever means available to escape - training is not required or practical. For work activities, proper training significantly reduces fall risk.

Fire Safety Specific Requirements

Requirement	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Emergency Exit Signage	MANDATORY - green/white signs at base, top, visible in darkness (RRF(SO) Art 14 + Safety Signs Regs 1996)	NOT required (unless ladder also serves as emergency exit)
Emergency Lighting	MANDATORY if natural light inadequate - must operate on mains failure, 3+ hours duration (RRF(SO) Art 14)	NOT required (unless ladder also serves as emergency exit)
Kept Clear at All Times	LEGAL REQUIREMENT - access must not be obstructed (RRF(SO) Art 14)	Good practice but not legal requirement
Accessibility	MUST NOT be locked so it cannot be immediately opened by anyone in emergency (RRF(SO) Art 14)	May be secured to prevent unauthorized access (if work access controlled)
Fire Risk Assessment	MANDATORY - must be included in fire risk assessment (RRF(SO) Art 9)	Not required (unless also serving as emergency exit)
Fire Authority Inspection	Subject to inspection by Fire and Rescue Service	Not subject to fire authority inspection (HSE jurisdiction)

Key Difference: Emergency-only ladders have **extensive fire safety requirements** (signage, lighting, accessibility) that do NOT apply to work access ladders (unless ladder also serves dual purpose).

Maintenance and Upkeep

Aspect	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Maintenance Standard	Must be "maintained in working order" (RRF(SO) Art 17)	Must be "maintained in efficient working order and good repair" (PUWER Reg 5)
Maintenance Program	"Sustained, suitable and sufficient programme" (RRF(SO) Art 17)	Suitable maintenance based on manufacturer instructions/inspection findings (PUWER Reg 5)
Defect Remediation	Must be remedied "without delay" (RRF(SO) Art 17)	Must be remedied to maintain safe condition (PUWER Reg 5)
Maintenance Records	Required (demonstrate compliance with RRF(SO))	Required where maintenance log prescribed (PUWER Reg 5)
Preventive Maintenance	Cleaning, painting, lubrication to prevent deterioration	Cleaning, painting, lubrication, component replacement based on wear
Out of Service Protocol	If unsafe, must be taken out of service immediately (cannot compromise emergency escape route without alternative provision)	If unsafe, must be taken out of service immediately (barrier, signage, alternative access arranged)

Key Similarity: Both require rigorous maintenance, but emergency ladders have additional urgency ("without delay") because they must remain available for emergency use at all times.

Documentation Requirements

Document	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access
Fire Risk Assessment	MANDATORY - ladder must be included (RRF(SO) Art 9)	Not required (unless dual purpose)
Work at Height Risk Assessment	Not required	MANDATORY - specific to work activities (WAHR Reg 6)
Inspection Records	Annual detailed inspections, 5-yearly structural surveys (PUWER + best practice)	6-12 monthly detailed inspections, pre-use check logs (recommended) (PUWER)
Training Records	Not required	MANDATORY - all user training documented (PUWER Reg 9)
Maintenance Records	Required (RRF(SO) Art 17)	Required (PUWER Reg 5)
Emergency Lighting Tests	Monthly function tests, annual discharge tests (RRF(SO) Art 17)	Not required (unless dual purpose)
Justification for Ladder Use	Must meet Approved Document B s.3.28 criteria (documented in fire risk assessment)	Must document why ladder used instead of safer alternatives (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 1)

Key Difference: Work access requires **justification documentation** and **training records**; emergency-only requires **fire risk assessment** and **emergency lighting test records**.

4. ENFORCEMENT AND INSPECTION AUTHORITY

Emergency Escape Only

Aspect	Details
Enforcing Authority	Local Fire and Rescue Service
Inspection Powers	RRF(SO) 2005 Article 27 - authorized inspectors can enter premises, inspect, require information
Enforcement Notices	Enforcement Notice (Art 30) - require specific actions; Prohibition Notice (Art 31) - prohibit use if serious risk
Prosecution	Failure to comply is criminal offense - fines up to £5,000 (magistrates) or unlimited (Crown Court), imprisonment up to 2 years
Common Inspection Focus	Fire risk assessment adequacy, accessibility (kept clear), signage, emergency lighting, maintenance records, structural condition

Source: [RRF\(SO\) Enforcement Articles](#)

Occasional Work Access

Aspect	Details
Enforcing Authority	Health and Safety Executive (HSE) or Local Authority (depending on premises type)
Inspection Powers	HSPA 1974 Section 20 - inspectors can enter premises, inspect work equipment, interview employees, request records
Enforcement Notices	Improvement Notice (HSPA s.21) - require actions within timeframe; Prohibition Notice (HSPA s.22) - prohibit unsafe activities
Prosecution	Criminal offense - fines up to £20,000 (magistrates) or unlimited (Crown Court), imprisonment up to 2 years
Fee for Intervention	HSE may charge investigation costs (£181/hour in 2024/25) if "material breach" identified
Common Inspection Focus	Risk assessment, justification for ladder use, inspection records, user training records, safety features (cages/hoops), pre-use check system

Source: [HSE Enforcement](#)

Key Difference: Different enforcement authorities with different priorities - Fire Service focuses on emergency escape adequacy; HSE focuses on work safety and fall prevention.

5. RETROSPECTIVE APPLICATION OF STANDARDS (PRE-2006 LADDERS)

Emergency Escape Only - Pre-2006 Ladder

Design Standards: Generally "grandfathered" - ladder complied with standards at time of installation.

Ongoing Obligations:

- ✓ Must remain structurally sound and safe for emergency use (PUWER Reg 5)
- ✓ Kept clear and accessible at all times (RRF(SO) Art 14)
- ✓ Emergency exit signage and lighting (RRF(SO) Art 14)
- ✓ Annual inspections by competent person (PUWER Reg 6)
- ✓ Five-yearly structural engineer surveys (BS 8210:2020 best practice)

Current Standards Apply When:

- Substantial modifications (adding safety cage, extending height, relocating)
- Complete replacement
- Major structural upgrades

Minor Maintenance Does NOT Trigger: Painting, rust treatment, individual rung replacement like-for-like, bolt tightening.

Source: Emergency_Escape_Ladder.md Section 3

Occasional Work Access - Pre-2006 Ladder

Design Standards: Generally "grandfathered" - ladder complied with standards at time of installation.

Ongoing Obligations:

- ✓ Must remain structurally sound and safe for work use (PUWER Reg 5)
- ✓ Risk assessment justifying ladder use over safer alternatives (WAHR Reg 6)
- ✓ Safety cage/hoops OR fall arrest for ladders over 2.4m (WAHR Schedule 6) - **this may be issue for pre-2006 ladders without cages**
- ✓ 6-12 monthly inspections by competent person (PUWER Reg 6)
- ✓ User training mandatory (PUWER Reg 9)
- ✓ Pre-use checks before each use (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 3)

Critical Issue for Pre-2006 Work Ladders: If ladder over 2.4m lacks safety cage/hoops, this is a **current non-compliance** with WAHR Schedule 6. Options:

1. Retrofit safety cage (triggers substantial modification - current standards apply)
2. Implement fall arrest system (requires training, harness provision, anchor points)
3. Justify in risk assessment why neither is reasonably practicable (difficult to justify for regular work use)

Current Standards Apply When: Same as emergency ladders - substantial modifications, replacement, major upgrades.

Source: Fixed_Ladder_Use_At_Work.md Section 2

Key Difference: Pre-2006 work access ladders face **additional compliance challenge** if they lack safety cages (WAHR requires cages/fall arrest over 2.4m as ongoing requirement, not just design standard).

6. COMMON COMPLIANCE GAPS

Emergency Escape Only Ladders - Common Deficiencies

Issue	Frequency	Risk	Remediation
No emergency exit signage	Very common	Medium	Install compliant green/white signs (£50-£200)
No emergency lighting or not tested	Common	Medium-High	Install emergency lights + establish test regime (£300-£1,000 installation + £100-£200/year testing)
Access obstructed by materials/equipment	Common	High	Clear access immediately (free), establish "keep clear" protocol
Not included in fire risk assessment	Common	Medium	Update fire risk assessment (£200-£500 if using external assessor)
No 5-yearly structural surveys	Very common	Medium-High	Commission structural engineer survey (£500-£1,500)
Ladder accessible but locked with key	Occasional	High	Replace with push-bar or easily openable mechanism (£100-£500)

Occasional Work Access Ladders - Common Deficiencies

Issue	Frequency	Risk	Remediation
No documented risk assessment	Very common	High	Conduct WAHR-compliant risk assessment (£300-£800 if external consultant)
No justification for ladder use documented	Very common	High	Document justification in risk assessment (part of above)
No user training program	Common	High	Establish training program, train all users (£200-£500/year)
Ladder over 2.4m lacks safety cage/fall arrest	Common (pre-2006 ladders)	Critical	Retrofit safety cage (£2,000-£5,000) OR implement fall arrest system (£500-£1,500)
No pre-use check system	Common	Medium	Establish pre-use check protocol, train users (part of training program)
Inspection frequency too infrequent	Common	Medium-High	Increase to 6-12 monthly (£300-£800/year)
No inspection records available	Common	Medium	Establish inspection regime with record-keeping (part of inspection service)

Most Critical Gaps:

- **Work access:** Lack of safety cage on ladder over 2.4m (WAHR non-compliance, high fall risk)
- **Emergency escape:** No emergency lighting or lighting not tested (life safety issue in emergency)
- **Both:** No inspection records (inability to demonstrate compliance to authorities)

7. DECISION MATRIX: SHOULD YOU RECLASSIFY YOUR LADDER?

Current Classification: Emergency Escape Only

Consider Reclassifying to Work Access IF:

- ✗ Ladder is occasionally used for maintenance/inspections (even rarely)
- ✗ HSE inspector has raised concerns about ladder use for work
- ✗ You want to formalize occasional access that currently happens informally
- ✗ Workers are accessing platform and using ladder despite "emergency only" designation

Action Required for Reclassification:

1. Conduct work at height risk assessment
2. Install safety cage if over 2.4m (if not present)
3. Implement training program
4. Increase inspection frequency
5. Maintain emergency escape requirements (now dual purpose)

Consider Keeping as Emergency-Only IF:

- ✓ Ladder is genuinely NEVER used for work access
- ✓ Alternative work access exists and is always used (stairs, MEWP, scaffolding)

- ✓ Platform is not accessed for work purposes (or accessed by alternative means)
- ✓ "Emergency only" designation is strictly enforced

Maintain Emergency Compliance:

- Emergency exit signage and lighting
- 12-monthly inspections
- Five-yearly structural surveys
- Fire risk assessment
- Kept clear at all times

Current Classification: Occasional Work Access

Consider Reclassifying to Emergency-Only IF:

- ✓ You have installed alternative permanent work access (new staircase, platform with guardrails)
- ✓ Work activities have ceased on platform (equipment decommissioned, process relocated)
- ✓ Ladder is no longer needed for work but could serve as supplementary escape route
- ✓ Ladder meets Approved Document B s.3.28 criteria for emergency escape (area not normally occupied, not for public, conventional stair impractical)

Action Required for Reclassification:

1. Confirm with Building Control or fire risk assessor that ladder is suitable as means of escape
2. Update fire risk assessment to include ladder
3. Install emergency exit signage and emergency lighting
4. Remove work access restrictions (must be immediately accessible in emergency)
5. Establish 5-yearly structural survey program
6. Cease user training (if workers no longer use ladder)

Consider Keeping as Work Access IF:

- ✓ Ladder is still occasionally needed for work (even rarely)
- ✓ Platform still requires access for inspections/maintenance
- ✓ No alternative permanent access exists
- ✓ Cost of alternative access is disproportionate

Maintain Work Access Compliance:

- Work at height risk assessment with justification
- Safety cage over 2.4m
- User training program
- Pre-use checks
- 6-12 monthly inspections

8. PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

For Businesses with Fixed Ladders

Step 1: Classify Each Ladder Correctly

For each fixed ladder on your premises, determine:

- Is it EVER used for work access? (Even occasionally, even informally?)
 - YES → Work access ladder (WAHR applies)
 - NO → Could be emergency-only IF meets Approved Document B criteria

Step 2: Assess Current Compliance

For each ladder:

- Review against appropriate requirements (see comparison tables above)
- Identify compliance gaps
- Prioritize by risk (focus on critical safety features first)

Step 3: Develop Action Plan

High Priority (Address Immediately):

- Work ladders over 2.4m without safety cage/fall arrest
- Emergency ladders without emergency lighting (if natural light inadequate)
- Any ladder without inspection records
- Any ladder with structural concerns
- Work ladders without user training

Medium Priority (Address Within 3 Months):

- Missing risk assessments (work or fire)
- Emergency ladders without signage
- Work ladders without documented justification
- Inspection frequency too infrequent

Low Priority (Address Within 6-12 Months):

- Emergency ladders without 5-yearly structural surveys (schedule next survey)
- Pre-use check systems not formalized
- Documentation improvements
- Preventive maintenance scheduling

Step 4: Budget and Resource Planning

Allocate budget for:

- Immediate compliance gaps (safety cages, emergency lighting, training)
- Ongoing annual costs (inspections, training, maintenance)
- Five-yearly structural surveys (for emergency ladders)
- Potential ladder replacement if remediation not economical

Step 5: Consider Alternatives

For work access ladders, seriously evaluate:

- Could fixed staircase be installed? (Most significant safety improvement)
- Could work be eliminated or done from ground level? (Remote monitoring, extended tools)
- Is frequency of access sufficient to justify ladder, or should we increase inspection frequency and use MEWP?

For HSE/Fire Authority Inspectors

When encountering fixed ladders during inspections, clarify:

Actual Use vs. Designation:

- Don't rely on "emergency only" signage alone
- Interview workers: "Do you ever use this ladder for work?"
- Check maintenance records: Evidence of regular use?
- Examine wear patterns: Does condition indicate regular use?

If Ladder Used for Work (Even Occasionally):

- WAHR requirements apply (not just emergency escape requirements)
- Check: Risk assessment, justification, safety cage >2.4m, training records, pre-use checks, inspection frequency

If Genuinely Emergency-Only:

- Check: Fire risk assessment, emergency signage, emergency lighting, kept clear, accessibility, inspection records, 5-yearly structural surveys

Common Enforcement Issues:

- Ladder used for work but only emergency compliance maintained (WAHR requirements not met)
- No documented justification for work ladder use (WAHR Schedule 6 Para 1)
- Pre-2006 work ladder over 2.4m without safety cage and no risk-assessed justification

9. SUMMARY TABLE: QUICK REFERENCE

Requirement	Emergency Escape Only	Occasional Work Access	Dual Purpose
Primary Legislation	Fire Safety Order 2005	Work at Height Regs 2005	BOTH
Risk Assessment	Fire risk assessment	Work at height risk assessment	BOTH
Justification Needed	Meet Approved Doc B criteria	Mandatory - document why ladder vs. stairs	BOTH
Safety Cage >2.4m	Recommended	MANDATORY (or fall arrest)	MANDATORY
User Training	NOT required	MANDATORY	MANDATORY (for workers)
Pre-Use Checks	NOT required	MANDATORY (before each use)	MANDATORY (for work use)
Detailed Inspections	12 months	6-12 months	6-12 months
Structural Surveys	5 years (recommended)	Not standard	5 years (recommended)
Emergency Signage	MANDATORY	NOT required	MANDATORY
Emergency Lighting	MANDATORY (if light inadequate)	NOT required	MANDATORY
Kept Clear	LEGAL REQUIREMENT	Good practice	LEGAL REQUIREMENT
Must Not Be Locked	LEGAL REQUIREMENT	May be secured	LEGAL REQUIREMENT
Training Records	NOT required	MANDATORY	MANDATORY
Enforcement Authority	Fire and Rescue Service	HSE/Local Authority	BOTH
Typical First Year Cost	£1,500-£5,000	£2,000-£7,500+	£3,000-£10,000+
Typical Annual Cost	£400-£1,200	£800-£2,100	£1,200-£3,300

10. RELATED DOCUMENTS

This comparison document should be read alongside:

- **Emergency Escape Ladder.pdf** - Comprehensive guidance on emergency escape-only fixed ladders (Fire Safety Order requirements, inspection regimes, fire authority compliance)
- **Fixed Ladder Use At Work.pdf** - Comprehensive guidance on fixed ladders for occasional work access (WAHR requirements, risk assessment, user training, safety features)

- Competent Person Fixed Ladder Inspections.pdf (if available) - Detailed guidance on competence requirements for inspectors

11. SOURCES AND REFERENCES

UK Legislation

- [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#)
- [Work at Height Regulations 2005](#)
- [Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 \(PUWER\)](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974](#)

Government Guidance

- [Building Regulations Approved Document B: Fire Safety](#)
- [HSE: Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders](#)
- [HSE: Work at Height Overview](#)

British Standards

- [BS 4211:2005+A1:2008](#) - Specification for permanently fixed ladders
- [BS EN ISO 14122-4:2016](#) - Safety of machinery: Fixed ladders
- [BS 8210:2020](#) - Guide to building maintenance management (Section 17.1.4)

Document Created: December 2024 **Purpose:** Compare requirements for emergency escape-only vs. occasional work access fixed ladders **Review Date:** Annually or when regulations/guidance updated

12. IMPORTANT DISCLAIMER

This comparison document provides guidance on the different requirements for fixed ladders under UK legislation. It does **NOT** constitute legal advice or professional engineering advice.

Classification of ladder use determines which requirements apply. Actual use (not signage or intention) is determinative. If uncertain:

- Consult with HSE or Fire and Rescue Service
- Engage competent health and safety professional
- Seek advice from fire risk assessor or structural engineer as appropriate

Each ladder must be assessed based on its specific circumstances, use patterns, and risks. This comparison provides general guidance - specific situations may require professional assessment.