
Portable Ladders (Step, Platform, or Trestle Ladders)
Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD)/Ergonomic Guidance for Stakeholders
Regarding Use of Ladders in Industrial Workplaces



Step Ladder

Platform Ladder

Trestle Ladder

Section 73 of Regulation 851 (Industrial Establishments) made under the Occupational Health and Safety Act prescribes the required features and use of portable ladders in the context of an industrial workplace. Non-compliance with section 73 may create a hazard for the worker. Requirements for the instruction/training of workers, maintenance of equipment, and the use of personal, protective equipment, such as fall arrest, may also apply in specific circumstances. In addition to legal requirements relating to the features and use of ladders, workplace parties should also consider safe practices, such as: the correct choice of ladder in specific circumstances, how to set it up, its weight capacity, and environmental conditions in which the ladder is being used in the workplace.

The MSD/Ergonomic **safe practices** that should also be considered while:

Climbing/Descending, including:

- Using both hands to climb/descend maintaining 3-point contact
 - 3-point contact (two hands & one foot OR two feet & one hand in contact with the ladder)
- Facing the ladder

Receiving/Placing/Removing Objects, including:

Range of Movement

- Keeping hands above knee level when reaching downwards to grasp objects
- Keeping belt buckle within centre of ladder when reaching sideways, e.g. belt buckle goes no further than side rails

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- Avoiding leaning backwards while moving object to its destination (e.g. size of object interferes with its movement across the ladder)
 - Avoiding rising up on toes when reaching above to place object

Standing Posture

- Standing no higher than the maximum step indicated on manufacturer’s label marking
- Keeping both feet on the ladder

Characteristics of Object

- Lifting object with one hand weighing **less than** 9 kg male, 6 kg female
- Lifting object with two hands weighing **less than**:

	Male	Female
Lift below shoulder height	<14 kg	<8 kg
Lift above shoulder height	<12 kg	<7 kg

Working, including:

- Being able to readily achieve 3-point contact
 - 3-point contact (two feet & one hand in contact with the ladder)
- Keeping belt buckle within centre of ladder when reaching sideways, e.g. belt buckle goes no further than side rails
- Standing no higher than the step indicated on the manufacturer’s label
- Avoiding forceful or jerky pushing/pulling movements where there is the potential for an unexpected reaction

This Guidance Note has been prepared to assist the workplace parties in understanding their obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. It is not intended to replace the OHSA or its regulations and reference should always be made to the official version of the legislation.

It is the responsibility of the workplace parties to ensure compliance with the legislation. This Guidance Note does not constitute legal advice and has no legal effect. If you require assistance with respect to the interpretation of the legislation and its potential application in specific circumstances, please contact your legal counsel.

While this Guidance Note will also be available to Ministry of Labour inspectors, they will apply and enforce the OHSA and its regulations based on the facts as they may find them in the workplace. This Guidance Note does not affect their enforcement discretion in any way.

For further information on ladder safety contact your health and safety association
www.healthandsafetyontario.ca