



Portable Ladders

Work Instruction

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Authority

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History

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0.0	05/01/2015	Hayley Roberts	Document renumbered, supersedes SIMS-PR0380-WI002
0.1	21/06/2016	Anthony Gollan	Document reviewed to incorporate 5 Star Commitment requirements.
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1 Purpose

This Work Instruction is designed to provide instruction on the safe use of portable ladders. It describes the conditions for purchasing, use, storage, inspection and maintenance in the workplace.

2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Portable Ladder	Any step, extension and single length type ladder
Worker	A person is a worker if the person carries out work in any capacity including work as — <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) an employee; or b) a contractor or subcontractor; or c) an employee of a contractor or subcontractor; or d) an employee of a labour hire company who has been assigned to work in the person’s business or undertaking; or e) an outworker; or f) an apprentice or trainee; or g) a student gaining work experience; or h) a volunteer; or i) a person of a prescribed class.

3 Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
HSE Advisor	The HSE Advisor shall be responsible for the up keep of the ladder register.
Site Supervisor	If there is no HSE Advisor attached to the work the Site Supervisor shall assume the HSE Advisors responsibilities.
Workers	Adhere to this work instruction

4 Flow Chart

N/A

5 Activities

5.1 Ladder Purchase

Prior to the purchase of any ladder the following points shall be taken into consideration:

- Ladders should be of insulated type that is, constructed of fibreglass or wood. Ladders constructed from aluminium or other metals should not be used.
- The primary type of ladders used at SCEE are, platform ladders. Prior to purchase of any other type of ladder the HSE Department are to be consulted and the necessary risk assessment for use conducted.

5.2 Inspection of Ladders

Depending upon the environment in which they are used, portable ladders will require differing formal inspection frequencies to ensure their fitness for use. Ladders must be inspected, maintained and repaired (as necessary) to ensure they are in proper working order and not a hazard to personnel.

Frequency of inspection will depend upon how often the ladder is used (weekly, daily, all the time) and the environment in which it is used (inside a commercial building suite, on an industrial workshop floor).

All SCEE ladders are to be inspected quarterly and tagged with similar colours to electrical inspection tags. The following guidelines are recommended:

Red	December to February
Green	March to May
Blue	June to August
Yellow	September to November

If client site inspection and tagging practices follow an alternative program, ladders associated with that site shall be inspected and tagged as per the client process. As a minimum these should still be inspected quarterly.

When inspecting ladders, any ladders found with the following faults shall be replaced or repaired:

- Fibreglass stiles cracked, chipped or severely faded with fibres exposed or evidence of solvent exposure;
- Timber stiles warped, splintered, cracked or bruised;
- Metal stiles twisted, bent, kinked, crushed or cracked welds or damaged feet;
- Rungs, steps, treads or top plates that are missing, worn, damaged or loose;
- Tie rods missing, broken or loose;
- Ropes, braces or brackets that are missing, broken or worn;
- Timber members that are covered with opaque paint or other treatment that could disguise faults in the timber;
- Missing, loose, bent or worn fasteners i.e. rivets, bolts or pins;
- Worn or damaged feet, including non-slip material.

5.3 Ladder Register

A register of ladders purchased and owned by SCEE shall be maintained on all work sites. As ladders are brought to site they shall be given an identification number that is to be entered into the register and marked on the ladder. The register shall also record the last inspection date of the ladder and the name of the person who conducted the inspection.

The HSE Advisor shall be responsible for the up keep of this register. If there is no HSE Advisor attached to the work the Site Supervisor shall assume responsibility.

Refer: SCEE-BS-HS-TEM-0065 SCEE Electrical Master HSE Registers

5.4 Non SCEE owned Ladders

Where SCEE personnel are required to use non-SCEE ladders, the ladder must be inspected prior to use. Prior to a SCEE subcontractor using a ladder on a SCEE site, it shall be inspected and tagged according to these requirements. The tagging of subcontractor ladders is not required at depot sites, although a requirement still exists to ensure the ladder is fit for purpose.

5.5 Defective Ladders

Any ladder found to be defective shall be tagged with an out of service tag and placed in the designated 'quarantine area' away from serviceable ladders. The tag is not to be removed until the ladder is either repaired or destroyed. Ladders that cannot be repaired shall remain unserviceable in the quarantine area until destroyed. Where a ladder has been destroyed this shall be noted on the Inspection Record and a final entry of this recorded as such, then also transferred to the appropriate Ladder Register.

5.6 Safe Work Practices

After it has been established that ladders are necessary to complete a task, the following guidelines must be adopted to reduce the risk or injury occurring. The methods used for safe working to undertake the task shall be documented in the JHA prior to commencement.

5.6.1 Ladder Care and Storage

Like any tools, ladders must be treated with care to ensure proper stability and safe use.

Proper ladder storage is a method of maintaining integrity of working ladders. Ladders must be stored in a manner that does not cause bends, bows and stress on the stiles or rungs. During transport, the same principle applies. The ladder must be supported so that it does not bend and so it does not fall from a vehicle during transport. Unrestrained ladders that move around in the back of a utility or truck can be damaged and the integrity of the ladder compromised.

Where possible ladders should be stored under cover and where they are not exposed to harsh conditions. UV radiation can degrade plastic resin or fibreglass ladders and for this reason they should not be exposed to excessive sunlight.

5.6.2 Choice of Ladder

If working from a ladder, platform ladders are the *only* acceptable type of ladder, unless prior approval has been given by the HSE department after a risk

assessment has been conducted and platform ladders deemed impractical. All platform ladders shall have drop bars fitted.

5.6.3 Before Use

Prior to the use of a ladder for any task, the following items must be checked.

- Ensure the ladder is suited for the intended task;
- Check the general condition of the ladder;
 - Rungs sturdy and free from wear or damage i.e. splitting or cracking
 - Stiles/Uprights of the ladder in sound condition, free from split or bowing
 - Rubber safety feet must in place and allow even stance of the ladder
 - Fittings and joints must be solid and free from corrosion
 - Pulleys must run smoothly and ropes must be free from fraying
 - General surfaces of the ladder must be smooth.
- Check that the ladder is valid for use by looking at the safety tag and has not been tagged unserviceable. If the ladder is yet to be inspected and registered, then it must be assessed by a competent person then registered appropriately;
- All work on ladders is to be noted on a JHA.

Refer: [SCEE-BS-HS-TEM-0008 Job Hazard Analysis \(JHA\) Template](#)

5.6.4 Positioning and use of Ladders

The ladder must be an industrial one complying with the relevant part of [AS/NZS 1892](#) series – i.e. labelled as rated for 120kg or more;

- Ladders should be secure at the bottom, thus reducing the risk of the base slipping;
- All ladders shall have a firm even base to work on, and all ladders shall have safety feet. Assess the environment in which the ladder is to be used. Muddy, bumpy or sandy surfaces are unsuitable as are slippery tiles and wet areas
- If using ladders in high traffic areas, warn pedestrians of the presence of workers and have a second person to provide ladder support and extra warning. Alternatively, a barricade may be used to secure the immediate working area.
- Be aware if working on a platform that positioning ladders close to the edge of the platform may expose a person to a working at heights risk as they may be positioned above the handrail level on the platform. If working in this position additional fall prevention measures shall be implemented (e.g. additional temporary handrail installed above the existing one, harness and inertia reel/lanyard adjusted to fall restraint). Depending on controls used a rescue plan may be required.
- Face the ladder at all times

- Always have two hands free to climb up and down (three points of contact); Ladder must be fit for purpose, i.e. aluminium ladders MUST NOT be used for electrical work or in a corrosive environment
- Use a tool belt, back pack or similar to carry tools or have someone pass tools to the user
- Activities such as hot work and the use of tools with cutting mechanisms (grinders, saws etc.) are NOT permitted to be used on ladders
- Always wear appropriate safety footwear as this aids ladder safety by providing grip and balance
- Never use a ladder in wind, rain or storm conditions
- Ladders must not be left erected and unattended in a public place
- Only one person is allowed on a ladder at a time.

Refer: [AS/NZS 1892](#)

5.7 Training Requirements

All personnel commencing work on a site shall be instructed as part of their induction as to the safe working requirements for ladders. The person made responsible for the inspections of ladders shall be instructed in the criteria for inspections by a person nominated by the Manager or their delegate.

Training is essential to ensuring safe work is conducted. Training records are retained as per SCEEs documentation [SCEE-BS-QU-PRO-0002 Quality Records](#).

Refer: [SCEE-BS-QU-PRO-0002 Quality Records](#)

6 References

Documents, both internal and external, that are referenced within the content of this work instruction, including Australian and International Standards and legislation.

Document ID	Document Title
SCEE-BS-HS-TEM-0065	SCEE Electrical Master HSE Registers
	AS/NZS 1892
SCEE-BS-QU-PRO-0002	Quality Records
SCEE-BS-HS-TEM-0008	Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Template

7 Related Documents

Related documents are those that have a relationship with this document, for example if this was the Operational Risk Management procedure related documents would include the work instruction to complete a JHA, the JHA template, Take 5 work instruction and booklet, etc.

Document ID	Document Title
AS/NZS 1892.1	Portable Ladders - Metal
AS 1892.2	Portable Ladders - Timber
AS/NZS 1892.3	Portable Ladders - Reinforced Plastic
AS/NZS 1892.5	Portable Ladders Part 5: Selection, Safe Use and Care