Safe Use of Ladders Procedure

This procedure stipulates the actions required to prevent workers falling and reducing injury when working on ladders.

The following measures are to be applied for work where the use of a ladder is required:

1. All workers required to use a ladder are to be trained and assessed for the task.
2. A ladder should only be used if it is to gain access to areas above or below ground, or other levels not provided with permanent access, or a better engineered solution (e.g. elevated work platform).
3. Select an appropriate ladder for the task that is being performed and ensure it complies with the relevant Australian Standards.
   - Inspect the ladder for any defects, broken or missing rungs. Defective ladders must be tagged, removed from service and reported to the supervisor.
   - Ensure the ladder is on firm, stable and level ground. Do not place a ladder on wet soil or grass or any uneven or slippery surface.
   - Depending on the unevenness, a wide enough plank or board under the ladder can be used or a purpose made device to steady the ladder.
4. Inside work with ladders (e.g. hanging items from the ceiling in retail stores or accessing stock from high storage shelves) — ensure that the ladder has a suitable platform to allow the person using it to carry items without risk of falling
5. Outside work with ladders — when placing a ladder into position for a work task assess the work environment and observe for any power lines, bus bars and ensure lines have been de-energised or insulated with tiger tails. Only a non-conducting ladder is to be used in these areas, NOT aluminium or any metal. A risk assessment is to be completed.
6. Ensure the ladder is adequately supported at the base.
7. A ladder is never to be walked by the person standing on the ladder.
   - The word ‘walk’ refers to a dangerous practice of a person at the top of a ladder who by moving their body causes the bottom of the ladder to lift the end of the stiles alternately to cause the ladder to move.
8. Set the ladder at a slope of approximately 4 in 1.
   - For every metre in height, the ladder should extend out from the vertical surface at the base by approximately 250mm.
   - Ensure locking devices on the ladder are secure.
9. There must only be one person on the ladder at all times and that person is to have 3 limbs on the ladder at all times i.e. 3 points of contact.
   - This means either 2 feet and 1 hand, or 1 foot and 2 hands on the ladder when ascending, descending or working on the ladder. Tools are to be carried in a tool belt, holster or pouch.
10. Never climb higher than the third rung from the top of the ladder.
   - The ladder should be long enough to provide at least one metre of solid support beyond the height of the task or area being accessed.
Do not climb higher than a position where the workers shoulders are level with the top of the stiles.

11. Do not use the ladder as a place of work unless the worker can grasp the ladder at waist height and only for tasks that can be competed with one hand allowing the worker to have 3 points of contact with the ladder.
   - Ladder is to be placed which allows the worker to face the ladder and the task without leaning over the side of the ladder.
   - The ladder is always faced while climbing up or down.
   - Always work within arms-reach from the ladder and keep the body centred and within the side rails.

12. Ladders are to be fitted with rubber or non-slip material feet to prevent slipping and slip resistant shoes are worn.

13. Ladders must be firmly secured or tied off or there is another person holding the base of the ladder.

Review
This procedure will be reviewed annually during the WHS/OHS Audit Program, through consultation with workers and when legislative requirements change or in the event of a serious incident involving a ladder.

Records
- Risk Management Register
- Job Safety Analysis
- Safe Work Procedure
- Training Register