

## ACCESS TO HEIGHTS

Access to height can be achieved by means of:

- Fixed ladders (or inclined stairway) and gantries or catwalks
- Temporary portable ladders
- Access equipment, such as a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP), commonly known as a Cherry picker
- Telehandler fitted with a suitably approved (CE marked) and tested man basket
- Scaffolding



Where access to height may involve a fall of 2 metres or more (or where the fall could be less than this but there is a risk of injury) then fall prevention or protection measures must be in place.

### **Golden Rule 3 – Never work above 2 metres unless:**

- You have fall prevention or protection measures in place
- You wear a safety harness fastened to a suitable anchor point if the task requires it.

Access or working at height **MUST NOT** involve:

- the use of a loading shovel bucket
- the roof of a vehicle – such as a van, truck or dumper
- any other improvised method.

Fixed ladders or catwalks are the most suitable method of gaining access and working at height, and should be installed where regular access is necessary.

### **Golden Rule 3 - Do not work at any height where there is a risk of injury from falling unless:**

- All other options have been ruled out
- Risks have been assessed
- You have a Safe System of Work.

## Fixed Ladders and Catwalks

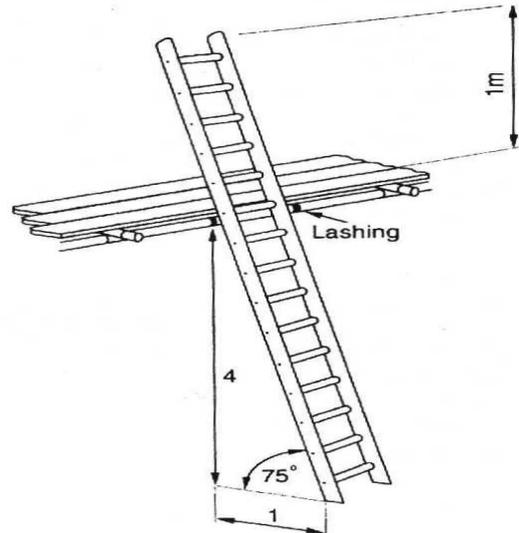
- The fixed ladder must be fitted with hoops when the ladder extends to more than 2½ metres, **and**
- The handrail around the working area or along the platform must be of sufficient height (at least 1.1m in height with an intermediate rail and a kickboard)
- Never lean or work outside the handrail without wearing a harness
- Never use the handrail as a step to reach inaccessible places.

**Guidance concerning the requirements for fixed vertical ladders, stairways, gantries and catwalks may be found in the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations, 1992 and associated Guidance Notes.**

## Temporary Portable Ladders

Are for the purpose of gaining temporary access to a place where access is not normally required, or for inspecting an otherwise inaccessible place.

- They should not be used as a working place (the only general exception to this applies to Window Cleaners, who can use ladders to undertake their work).
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- When used, the portable ladder should be set up on level firm ground, either footed at the base or lashed at the top.



- Ladders must not be secured by their rungs; lashings should be around the stiles, or proprietary ladder ties should be used

## Mobile Elevating Work Platforms (MEWPs) or 'Cherrypickers'

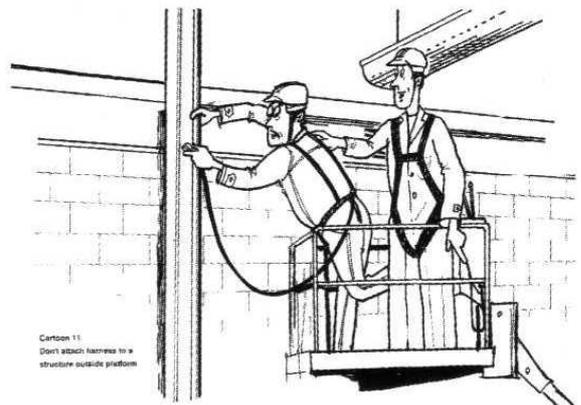
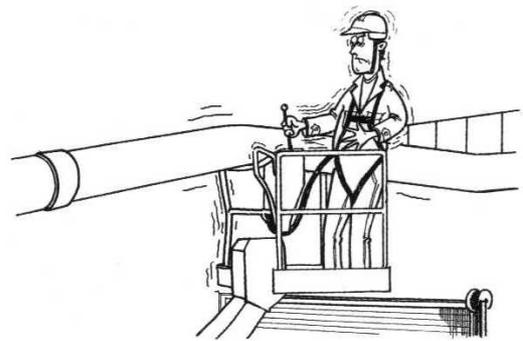
Are extremely versatile devices for gaining access to height. However specific precautions must be observed, which include:

Daily or prior to use:

- The operator must be trained to operate the vehicle
- The equipment must only be used on level firm ground, unless a levelling device is fitted
- The payload of the man basket must never be exceeded
- The equipment must never be used as a crane (used to sling or suspend loads), nor must it be used to lift or raise plant when in use (such as lifting pipes), as overturning may result
- The operative(s) should be wearing and using a fall arrest device and suitable harness
- Never attach the harness to anything outside the basket
- Never operate the equipment while the basket is raised
- If overhead power lines are present then an exclusion area near the cables must be maintained, and a banksman must be employed
- Always ensure that the equipment cannot be run into by other plant when in use - create an effective barrier around the operating area
- Never use the handrail as a step, or straddle outside the basket
- The rams operating the platform must not allow the basket to drop or slew if an hydraulic leak occurs.

The platform must have been examined within the last six months.

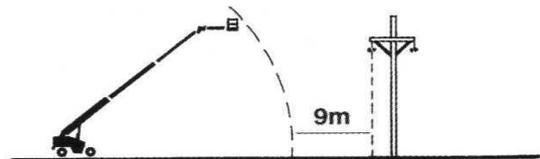
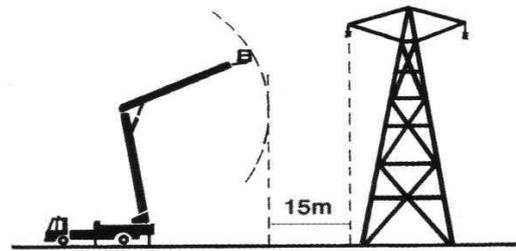
***Further information and guidance should be obtained from the supplier, hirer or manufacturer of the equipment.***



**Telehandlers** fitted with a man basket require the same precautionary measures as those applied to “Cherry pickers”. Additionally:

- The man basket must be positively attached to the telehandler lift boom
- The telehandler must not be moved while the basket is occupied.

The supplier/hirer or manufacturer of the telehandler must be consulted to ensure that the machine is suitable and approved for the attachment of a man basket.



Always keep a safe distance from overhead power lines.

**Scaffolding (except portable tower scaffolds) may only be built by competent scaffold erectors.**

**Portable tower scaffolds must:**

- Be constructed on level firm ground
- Not exceed the 4:1 ratio (height: narrowest width)
- Provide fall protection during construction
- Allow access within the tower (if overturn is likely by attaching a ladder outside)
- Be fitted with a handrail and suitable secure flooring to the working area
- Be provided with the maximum loading
- Be constructed by trained persons

**QUESTIONS – (there may be more than one correct answer)**

		<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>1</b>	Above what potential fall height do you need prevention or protection measures in place?	1.5 metres	2.0 metres	2.5 metres
<b>2</b>	At what height must fixed ladders be fitted with hoops?	2 metres	2.5 metres	3 metres
<b>3</b>	When should ladders and access equipment be checked for obvious visual defects?	6 monthly	Weekly	Before every use by the user
<b>4</b>	Do you always need to use a fall arrest device and harness in a ‘Cherry picker’?	Yes	Only if you have to reach outside the basket	Only if you’re working above 2 metres
<b>5</b>	Do you need to be trained to erect a portable tower scaffold?	No – just follow supplier’s instructions	Depends on the final height of the tower	Yes - always

