



MEMO

From Secretary for Development
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Construction Site Safety Manual

Prohibition of Ladders for Work Purpose on Public Works Sites

Our examination of fatal incidents of construction industry in the past revealed that quite a number of them were related to use of ladders for work purpose. To eliminate the hazards of using ladders, ladders (including but not limited to straight ladders, step ladders, A-ladders, folding ladders or other ladders alike) shall be prohibited for admission to all public works sites (including those sites and venues under the possession of the Contractor temporarily, or access / fenced off by the Contractor temporarily for carrying out maintenance or upgrading works) for work purpose except under very exceptional circumstances. Particular Specification (“PS”) clauses for the captioned subject is enclosed at
_____ **Annex A.**

2. For the avoidance of doubt, step platforms and hop-up platforms are regarded as light-duty working platforms.

Effect on Public Works Contracts

3. The PS clauses at Annex A shall be incorporated in all new public works contracts (including capital works contracts and maintenance and term contracts) with tenders to be invited **on or after 15 July 2026**. For new public works contracts tendered before 15 July 2026, project officers should also incorporate the PS clauses at Annex A into the tender documents by way of tender addendum as far as practicable. For existing public works contracts, contract administrators, taking into account the circumstances of individual existing public works contracts, the relevant measures should be adopted as far as reasonably practicable.

4. The PS clauses at Annex A will be incorporated into the Construction Site Safety Manual in its next updating exercise.

5. Please bring this memo to the attention of the project officers who are responsible for the preparation of tenders for public works contracts and the project officers, consultants and resident site staff supervising public works contracts.

Enquiries

6. Any enquiries on the above should be addressed to Mr LEE Man-yiu, Assistant Secretary (Works Policies 5) 5 at 3509 8305.

(Terence T M LAM)
for Secretary for Development

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**Particular Specification for
Prohibition of Ladders for Work Purpose on Public Works Sites**

- (a) The **Contractor / Contractor* shall ensure all light-duty working platforms conform to international or national standards and relevant statutory safety requirements and maintain a register with proper inspection and maintenance records according to the manufacturers' manuals. Such registers shall be maintained and included in the monthly reports of the Safety Officer of **Contractor / Contractor*.
- (b) Ladders shall be purely used as a means of access and egress to working platforms in general.
- (c) No ladders for work purpose shall be admitted to the site in general except under very exceptional circumstance. In case of very exceptional circumstance, ensuing sub-clauses (d) to (h) shall be followed.
- (d) Under very exceptional circumstance, for admission of ladders to the site for work purpose, the **Contractor / Contractor* shall demonstrate that, by way of a documented task-specific risk assessment, the use of other equipment which could provide a higher level of fall protection than ladders is infeasible. Nevertheless, in no case shall ladders be allowed to be used for work at height of 2 metres or more.
- (e) With the documented risk assessment in sub-clause (d) above, the most senior managerial staff at site level of the **Contractor / Contractor* shall personally endorse such use of ladders for work purpose. Such obligations shall not be further delegated to other persons of the **Contractor / Contractor*, subcontractors or workers. The endorsement shall be recorded in writing.
- (f) The documented risk assessment in sub-clause (d) and the personal endorsement from the most senior managerial staff at site level of the **Contractor / Contractor* in sub-clause (e) above shall be submitted to the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising*

Officer. Consent for admission of ladders to the site and commencement of work shall only be issued provided that the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising Officer* has satisfied himself that the circumstance is so exceptional that adequately justify the use of ladders for work purpose. Such consent shall be issued by the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising Officer* in writing with no delegation allowed.

- (g) All ladders, irrespective of whether they are owned by the **Contractor / Contractor*, subcontractors, workers or the owners of the premises or venues, shall be centrally managed and controlled by the **Contractor / Contractor*. The **Contractor / Contractor* shall implement a permit-to-work system to ensure that adequate and suitable control and safety measures are put in place to safeguard the workers concerned, with reference to the latest version of Guidelines on Work-above-ground Safety promulgated by the Construction Industry Council. The date, starting time, anticipated completion time, location and users for using ladders for work purpose shall be clearly stated on the permit-to-work. The duration for using ladders for work purpose shall be keep at a minimum. Adequate training and instruction shall be provided by the **Contractor / Contractor*. In addition, a pre-work check on use of ladder with the aid of a checklist in the said Guidelines shall be conducted. All the permit-to-work issued under this sub-clause shall be submitted to the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising Officer* for record.
- (h) Full time immediate supervision shall be provided by the foreman directly engaged by the **Contractor / Contractor* and checked by the staff of the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising Officer* not lower than the rank of **Senior Inspector of Works / Senior Clerk of Work* or equivalent. The aforementioned foreman directly engaged by the **Contractor / Contractor* and the staff of the **Project Manager / Service Manager / Architect / Engineer / Maintenance Surveyor / Surveyor / Supervising Officer* shall

personally witness the admission of the ladders to the site and the removal of the ladders from the site after work.

Note:

The optional entries with asterisk (*) are for selection by contract drafter to suit contracts using the Hong Kong Edition of NEC Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC) or NEC4 Term Services Contract (TSC) or The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSARG) General Conditions of Contract (GCC) for Civil Engineering Contract (1999 Edition), HKSARG GCC for Term Contracts for Civil Engineering Works (2002 Edition), HKSARG GCC for Building Works (1999 Edition), HKSARG GCC Term Contracts for Building Works (2004 Edition), HKSARG Electrical and Mechanical (E&M) Engineering Works Engineering Works (1999 Edition) and HKSARG GCC for Term Contracts for E&M Engineering Works (2007 Edition). Contract drafters are reminded to remove the inapplicable ones in [blue](#).