



1300 apprentice

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SAFETY ALERT

LOST TIME INJURY DUE TO FALL FROM LADDER

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WHAT HAPPENED:

Our apprentice plasterer was using a ladder to install cornice on a roof. One of the legs of the ladder collapsed and the apprentice fell from the ladder. The apprentice suffered a broken wrist and a laceration to his bottom lip in the fall.



WHY DID IT HAPPEN (DIRECT CAUSE):

The apprentice was not using a ladder that belonged to the host. The host employers ladders were still on the truck and the apprentice used a ladder that was on the site already.

The ladder was a domestic style ladder used for home maintenance not for industrial trades work. The apprentice failed to complete a safety inspection on the ladder prior to using it.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE INCIDENT:

- Worker using a ladder that was not his own
- Worker failed to complete a safety inspection of the ladder prior to using
- Safe work with ladder procedure not followed
- The ladder was not of a trade quality standard

CORRECTIVE ACTIONS REQUIRED:

- Always use a ladder that meets Australian Standard (AS/NZS 1892)
- Always ensure the ladder meets the requirements of the task being carried out. (Do not use a handy man ladder to work in an industrial setting)
- Re instruction to the workers in the Safe use of ladders – as per Workcover Code of Practice
- Ensure a tool box talk / monitor with ladder safety



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Key Learning's:

- Falling from a height greater than two meters can kill or cause serious injury to you or someone else.
- Ladders come in different standards. Always ensure Industrial type ladders are used at all times in trade type environments.
- When workers are using ladders regularly and are comfortable with them there could be some complacency on the risks that are associated with them.
- Use ladder safety as a topic in all tool box talks at least once every two months to reinforce the safety

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Ladder Safety Checklist

- Do not use a 'Domestic' duty rated ladder for frequent heavy use, or in a workplace, an 'Industrial' duty rated ladder must be used.**
- Prior to each use check ladders for damage or missing components.
- Check for loose or missing bolts or rivets.
- Check ladder feet for excessive wear.
- Check ropes are not fraying and are securely attached.
- Check that ladder stiles/rungs/treads are straight.
- Check spreaders are in good order.
- Check that the ladder is free from dust, water, grease and corrosion.
- Clean a ladder with mild soapy water (Ensure you dissolve the soap in water prior to use) and ensure it is dry prior to use.
- Check timber ladder for splits, rot, and insect infestation.
- Never paint a timber ladder use a clear varnish suitable for exterior or marine environments so that defects are not hidden.
- If a ladder does have any defects take it out of service immediately. Either send it to a ladder repairer or destroy the ladder so it cannot be used and replace it.
- Ladder repairs must be carried out by a competent person
- Store ladders in a dry, covered location.
- Exposure to excessive heat may weaken a ladder. Have the ladder checked by a competent person
- If the ladder has sustained a blow or impact carefully check the ladder for defects prior to next use.
- Fibreglass ladders will over time degrade and fibres may become exposed. Wash the ladder with a commercial solvent and apply enough coats of polyurethane or clear acrylic lacquer to encapsulate the fibre