

# Ladders in scaffolding

**TAKE RESPONSIBILITY:  
KNOW AND MEET  
THE STANDARD**

**EN131 • BS2037 CLASS 1 • BS1129 CLASS1**  
ARE THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS IN SCAFFOLDING

**YOUR LADDER MAY LOOK GENUINE...BUT IS IT?  
MAKE CERTAIN YOUR LADDER COMPLIES**

**NO licence number or test certificate means  
NO guarantee of compliance**

- >> To meet EN131 it MUST display an approvals mark (e.g. a Kitemark and a licence number)
- >> If it's a Class 1 industrial ladder it MUST meet the strength, dimensional and rung requirements of BS2037 or BS1129 and carry a test certificate from an approved body such as BSI
- >> It should be produced by a manufacturer with an accredited ISO quality management system

**I G N O R A N C E I S N O D E F E N C E**



The Ladder Association acknowledges  
the support of the Health & Safety  
Executive in producing this guidance



**“With an estimated 40,000 scaffolding ladders in use by NASC members and approximately 50,000 being sold to the UK construction industry each year, product quality is a prerequisite for safety when working at height.**

**This document is designed to inform and guide anyone with the responsibility for specifying and purchasing ladders for use in scaffolding applications. Always use the right ladder, manufactured to the correct standard and use it safely.”**

Don Aers  
Technical Manager  
Ladder Association

## What are the correct standards?

The ladders you specify, purchase and use must be safe and fit for purpose. The easiest way to make sure your ladders are safe and fit for purpose is to ensure they are tested/certified by an accredited test authority e.g. the British Standards Institution. They SHOULD:

- Conform to the relevant standards or meet the strength and dimensional requirements of those standards where the material is outside the scope of the standard;
- Be produced by a manufacturer with an accredited ISO quality management system and supplied with labelling which enables you to identify the manufacturer, e.g. includes a licence number;
- If you do not, then you may need to prove they are fit for purpose.

## Standards for ladders used in scaffolding work

Standard	Material	Max Safe Working Load	Max Static Load <sup>1</sup>	Application
BS2037 Class 1 Industrial	Aluminium only <sup>2</sup>	130kg		High frequency use in onerous conditions
BS1129 Class1 Industrial	Timber only	130kg		
EN131	All	110kg	150kg <sup>1</sup>	Frequent use in reasonable conditions

### Notes:

1. **IMPORTANT. THE MAXIMUM STATIC LOAD 150kgs SHOWN ON EN131 LADDERS IS NOT THE MAXIMUM SAFE WORKING LOAD WHICH IS 110kgs.**
2. Ladders made from other materials, such as steel, can be tested to the strength requirements of BS2037 but cannot be licensed to BS2037. They can only be licensed to EN131.
3. Class 2 in BS2037 and BS1129 no longer exists and has been replaced by EN131.

## How to make sure you get the right ladder

CHECK	HOW ?
It has been tested/certified by an accredited test authority.	Ask supplier/manufacturer for a copy of the certificate/test report issued by a European accredited test authority. No certificate or test report means that you have no guarantee that the ladder is fit for purpose and safe to use.
It has been produced by a manufacturer with an accredited ISO Quality Management System.	Ask supplier/manufacturer for a copy of their ISO qms certificate issued by a European accredited test authority. No certificate means you have no guarantee that EVERY ladder will meet the requirements of the relevant standard.

Ladder Association training covers all aspects of ladder selection, use, inspection and maintenance. [www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)

The CISRS scheme provides training in scaffolding. [www.cisrs.org.uk](http://www.cisrs.org.uk)

# How to use your ladder safely

- >> Plan ahead, do a risk assessment considering the hierarchy for scaffolding access in TG20
- >> Is it fit for purpose, to the correct standard and of the right length?
- >> Carry out pre-use visual checks and recorded inspections
- >> Position it at 70-75 degrees on dry, flat, firm and strong ground
- >> CRITICAL. It must be secured at the top at the earliest opportunity
- >> Maintain three points of contact when climbing and descending
- >> If using tools, use a tool belt or back pack
- >> Under no circumstances overload the ladder
- >> EN131 maximum safe working load 110kg
- >> BS2037 & BS1129 Class 1 maximum safe working load 130kg
- >> Wear the correct footwear, in good condition and free of mud, etc
- >> Do not use the ladder in unsuitable weather conditions
- >> Protect the ladder - store and transport it safely to avoid damage
- >> Ladders should extend at least 1m above the platform or provide suitable hand holds



## What the Work at Height Regulations say...

They demand sensible risk management, proper planning and the organisation of work at height. You must also be able to demonstrate competence when it comes to specifying, supervising, managing or using equipment. This includes ladders, and Ladder Association training provides the information and knowledge you need to demonstrate your competence.

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)





# How and when to inspect your ladder

## PRE-USE VISUAL CHECKS

- Intended to make sure the ladder is still secured properly and safe to use NOW
- Carried out prior to use by the user and at least once a day each day the ladder is used

## RECORDED INSPECTIONS

- Are required by the Work at Height Regulations 2005
- Carried out as part of the scaffold inspections required before first use, every 7 days, after alterations and after adverse weather
- Carried out in accordance with Ladder Association and NASC guidance
- Should follow the manufacturer's recommendations
- Must be carried out by a competent person
- Intended to make sure the ladder is still secure and has not been damaged

## WHAT TO CHECK

### You must not have:

- Stiles that are bent or distorted, corroded or rotten
- Stiles that are of different lengths
- Feet that are missing, worn or damaged
- Rungs that are missing, bent, corroded or rotten
- Rungs that are worn or loose or with damaged connections
- Tie rods that are missing, damaged or corroded
- Evidence of makeshift repairs
- Missing fixings such as nuts, bolts, welds, screws or rivets
- Mud or oil or other contaminants on rungs and stiles

### CRITICAL:

Remember to check the scaffolding's ladder opening protection is in place and functional

Ladder Association training covers everything you need to know about ladder inspection. Specially designed ladder inspection labels are also available from the Association.

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk)

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## More Information:

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