

Toolbox talk: Working at height on stepladders and podiums

Starter talk. Adapt it to your site.

Site		Date	
Topic		Delivered by	

Key points

1	Stepladders are for short, light work. HSE recommends other equipment if you'd be up a stepladder for more than 30 minutes at a time, so use a podium or tower with guard rails for longer jobs.
2	Check it every time before you use it: the feet, the stiles, the steps, the platform and the locking bars. If anything is damaged, don't use it and tell your supervisor.
3	Keep three points of contact at the working position: two feet and one hand, or two feet and your body against the steps when you need both hands for a moment.
4	Don't work from the top three steps unless there's a suitable handhold. Don't overreach, carry only light tools and materials, and face the work rather than working side on.

Question for the team

Which job on this site has someone up a stepladder for more than half an hour, and what could we use instead?

Questions and concerns raised

Write down what the team says, in their words.

Actions agreed

Action	By whom	By when

Attendance

Everyone who attended signs.

Name	Company	Signature

Sources: [HSE, How and when to use a ladder at work](#); [HSE, How to check your ladder is safe before you use it](#); [HSE, Types of ladder and using them safely](#). All at hse.gov.uk.

Toolbox talk: Dust from cutting and sanding

Starter talk. Adapt it to your site.

Site		Date	
Topic		Delivered by	

Key points

1	Breathing construction dust regularly can cause lung cancer, COPD, asthma and silicosis. The damage builds up slowly, and by the time anyone notices it can be serious and permanent.
2	Make less dust in the first place. Order materials cut to size, use a less powerful tool where it does the job, and choose tapered-edge plasterboard so there's less jointing to sand.
3	Catch dust at the tool with on-tool extraction and the right class of unit: H or M for wood, and H, M or L for sanding plasterboard joints. A general vacuum won't do. Clean up with a vacuum fitted to an H or M class unit.
4	Masks are the last line of protection. Where you need one, use an FFP3 disposable mask or a half mask with a P3 filter. Tight-fitting masks need a face-fit test, and you need to be clean shaven to wear one.

Question for the team

Where on this job are we still making dust we could avoid, and is our extraction the right class for it?

Questions and concerns raised

Write down what the team says, in their words.

Actions agreed

Action	By whom	By when

Attendance

Everyone who attended signs.

Name	Company	Signature

Sources: [HSE, Construction dust \(CIS36\)](#); [HSE, Construction dust](#). All at hse.gov.uk.

Toolbox talk: Manual handling of boards and materials

Starter talk. Adapt it to your site.

Site		Date	
Topic		Delivered by	

Key points

1	Injuries from handling boards rarely come from one lift. They build up from repeated poor lifting and awkward posture. HSE notes that special thermal or acoustic boards can weigh up to 50 kg each.
2	Get materials delivered as close as possible to where they'll be used, by telehandler or hoist where you can, and move them on a trolley rather than by hand.
3	If a board has to be carried by hand, it's a two-person job. Use carrying handles to get a proper grip.
4	Use a ceiling lift or adjustable props for boards overhead, and a foot-operated board lifter for low wall panels so you're not stooping. Swap tasks during the day to break up repetitive work.

Question for the team

What are we still carrying by hand on this site that could go on a trolley or a hoist, or needs a second person?

Questions and concerns raised

Write down what the team says, in their words.

Actions agreed

Action	By whom	By when

Attendance

Everyone who attended signs.

Name	Company	Signature

Sources: [HSE, Construction manual handling](#); [HSE, Manual handling: plasterboard](#). All at hse.gov.uk.

Toolbox talk: Working around other trades in occupied buildings

Starter talk. Adapt it to your site.

Site		Date	
Topic		Delivered by	

Key points

1	Know who else is working in your area today and what they're doing. If your work could affect theirs, or theirs yours, agree how you'll handle it before you start and tell the supervisor about any clash.
2	Keep the work separate from the people who use the building. Use barriers and warning signs, stay inside the agreed area, and do the noisiest or dustiest work at the times agreed with the client.
3	Make sure nothing can fall on anyone. Plan how materials go up and come down, avoid working above people, and keep the area under the work clear.
4	Keep corridors and fire exits clear, store materials inside your work area, and know the building's fire alarm, escape routes and assembly point.

Question for the team

Who else is working near us today, and where could our work and theirs get in each other's way?

Questions and concerns raised

Write down what the team says, in their words.

Actions agreed

Action	By whom	By when

Attendance

Everyone who attended signs.

Name	Company	Signature

Sources: [HSE, Planning for construction work](#); [HSE, Protecting the public: your next move \(HSG151\)](#); [HSE, Protecting the public](#). All at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).

Toolbox talk: Reporting near misses

Starter talk. Adapt it to your site.

Site		Date	
Topic		Delivered by	

Key points

1	A near miss is something that could have hurt someone but didn't, like a dropped tool, a board that slipped or a ladder that moved. HSE says near misses shouldn't be ignored, because they show how well health and safety is being managed.
2	Report every near miss to your supervisor the same day, even if nobody was hurt and even if it was your own mistake. Reporting one should never get anyone into trouble.
3	Write down what happened, where and when, while it's fresh. HSE calls a pattern of near misses an early warning that something needs attention.
4	Some serious near misses, called dangerous occurrences, must be reported to HSE under RIDDOR. Your supervisor decides that. Your part is to tell them straight away.

Question for the team

What's the last near miss you saw on a site, and did anyone write it down?

Questions and concerns raised

Write down what the team says, in their words.

Actions agreed

Action	By whom	By when

Attendance

Everyone who attended signs.

Name	Company	Signature

Sources: [HSE, Near-miss book](#); [HSE, Report accidents and illness](#); [HSE, RIDDOR dangerous occurrences](#). All at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).