

## Safety Alert

ARTC No. 125  
Issued 14/08/2020

### Working at Heights Risk-Ladder Usage

#### Incident

This alert has been issued to raise awareness of a fall from heights incident where an experienced rigger was using a ladder to climb to the top of a culvert to attach 4 hooks to perform lifting activities. As the rigger was climbing down the ladder, it slipped causing the rigger to ride the ladder to the ground. This had the potential to cause serious harm to the rigger who only sustained minor injuries.

Initial investigations identified a change occurred on site resulting in the rigger using a smaller ladder than used on the previous occasions. The smaller ladder was not secured, or footed, and resulted in reduced overhang at the top of the ladder and ability to be footed on stable ground.

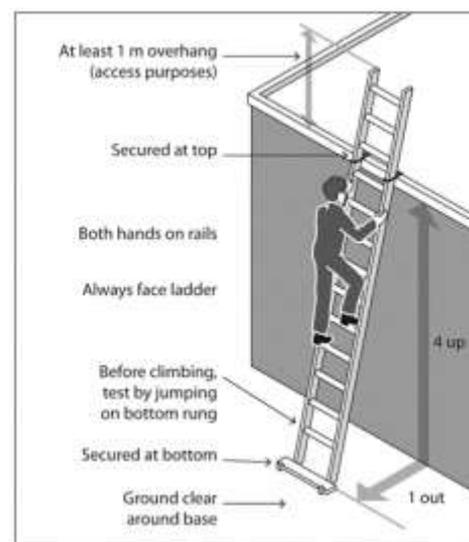


ARTC's Fatal and Severe Risk 9 – Fall From Heights has an associated lifesaving behaviour: ***“I will always use adequate protection where I can fall more than 2m or within 2m of an edge”***

#### Initial Lessons

Two contributors have been identified as part of this event and are critical to immediately form part of any work at heights task.

1. **Task Planning** – Alternative methods of access and egress such as mechanical aids (e.g. EWP, Scissor Lifts) or work platforms must be considered before using ladders when planning work that can lead to a fall from height.
2. **Use of ladders** – If ladders are the only way to complete the task then they should only be used for access and egress whilst maintaining three points of contact. During set up, a 4:1 height to width ratio must be used. It must also be secured or footed, tied off with a minimum of 1m overhang at the top. Ladders should be set up on level ground for safe stability as per the adjacent image. Figures 1 & 2 shows examples of correct ladder use out in the field.





**Figure.1** Ladder footed, 3 points of contact and 4:1 ratio



**Figure.2** Ladder tied off with 1m overhang at top

### **For your action**

1. Place Safety Alert on display and make copies of this alert available to people who report to you (without regular email access) and ensure that the contents of the safety alert are discussed/explained to your staff. If engaging contractors, ensure they are made aware of current ARTC Safety Alerts.
2. Ensure a method of sign-off is obtained (e.g. via toolbox/safety meetings/morning briefings etc) to verify that the Safety Alert has been distributed and discussed. If you have any safety concerns with this Safety Alert, please speak directly to your leader.

### **Further information**

All Safety Alerts issued can be [found here](#).

For further information contact Brett Teasdale Principal Advisor Safety Hunter Valley