

Alderholt Village Hall

1 Station Road
Alderholt
Dorset
SP6 3RB



Ladder Policy

Using ladders in the Hall: Rules & Guidance for Hirers & Volunteers Using a Ladder

- A hirer must obtain permission from a member of the Management Committee to use a ladder in the Hall

When permission to use a ladder is given, the Committee member must draw this policy to the attention of hirers and volunteers who must read it before they start using a ladder

- Ladders and Stepladders owned by the Hall can be made available for use by hirers and volunteers
- Ladders **MUST NOT** be brought to the Hall for use by anyone other than contractors employed by the Hall
- A ladder **must not** be used by a hirer or volunteer when only one person is present in the Hall
- Hirers and volunteers must be made aware of this policy, a copy of which is to be found in the information folder in the kitchen
- Height Restriction – Hall Hirers must not reach, work above 8 metres, or make any fixing above the height

Checking the ladder before the beginning of the working period

- The user must check the ladder before use. Before starting a task, you should always carry out a 'pre-use' check to spot any obvious visual defects to make sure the ladder is safe to use
- Check after ladder is moved or its position has changed, e.g., a ladder has been dropped or moved from a dirty area to a clean area (check the state or condition of the feet), from outside to inside
- Check the stiles (verticals) – make sure they are not bent or damaged, as the ladder could buckle or collapse

- Check the feet – if they are missing, worn or damaged the ladder could slip. Also check ladder feet when moving from soft/dirty ground (e.g., dug soil, loose sand/stone, a dirty workshop) to a smooth, solid surface (e.g., paving slabs), to make sure the foot material and not the dirt (e.g., soil, chippings or embedded stones) is making contact with the ground
- Check the rungs – if they are bent, worn, missing or loose the ladder could fail
- Check any locking mechanisms – if they are bent or the fixings are worn or damaged the ladder could collapse. Ensure any locking bars are engaged
- Check the stepladder platform – if it is split or buckled the ladder could become unstable or collapse
- Check the steps or treads on stepladders – if they are contaminated, they could be slippery; if the fixings are loose on steps, they could collapse. If you spot any of the above defects, don't use the ladder and notify a member of the Management Committee

Once you have done your 'pre-use' check, there are simple precautions that can minimise the risk of a fall:

Use your Ladder Safely

- Only carry light materials and tools – read the manufacturers' labels on the ladder and assess the risks
- Ensure you have the correct ladder for the task. Is it long enough or high enough for the task?
- Ensure the ladder angle is at 75° – you should use the 1 in 4 rule (e.g., 1 unit out for every 4 units up)
- Always grip the ladder and face the ladder rungs while climbing or descending – don't slide down the stiles
- Avoid holding items when climbing (consider using a tool belt)
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing (this means a hand and two feet) and wherever possible at the work position
- Where you cannot maintain a handhold, other than for a brief period (e.g., to hold a nail while starting to knock it in, starting a screw etc), you will need to take other measures to prevent a fall or reduce the consequences if one happened
- For a leaning ladder, you should secure it (e.g., by tying the ladder to prevent it from slipping either outwards or sideways) and have a strong upper resting point, i.e., do not rest a ladder against weak upper surfaces (e.g., glazing, or plastic gutters)
- Don't overreach – make sure your belt buckle (navel) stays within the stiles

- Don't overload it – consider workers' weight and the equipment or materials they are carrying before working at height
- Don't try to move or extend ladders while standing on the rungs
- Don't work off the top three rungs and try to make sure the ladder extends at least 1 m (three rungs) above where you are working
- Don't stand ladders on moveable objects, such as pallets, bricks, lift trucks, tower scaffolds, excavator buckets, vans, or mobile elevating work platforms
- Don't work within 6 m horizontally of any overhead power line unless it has been made dead or it is protected with insulation. Use a non-conductive ladder (e.g., fibreglass or timber) for any electrical work

Stepladders

When using a stepladder to carry out a task:

- Check all stepladder feet are in contact with the ground and the steps are level
- Only carry light materials and tools
- Check and ensure any locking devices are engaged correctly
- Don't overreach
- Don't stand and work on the top three steps (including a step forming the very top of the stepladder) unless there is a suitable handhold
- Try to position the stepladder to face the work activity and not side on
- Try to avoid work that imposes a side loading, such as side-on drilling through solid materials (e.g., bricks or concrete)

Where side-on loadings cannot be avoided, you should prevent the steps from tipping over, e.g., by tying the steps. Otherwise, use a more suitable type of access equipment. Maintain three points of contact at the working position. This means two feet and one hand, or when both hands need to be free for a brief period, two feet and the body supported by the stepladder. When deciding if it is safe to carry out a particular task on a stepladder where you cannot maintain a handhold (e.g., to put a box on a shelf, hang wallpaper, install a smoke detector on a ceiling), this must always be considered.

Only use a ladder:

- On firm ground
- On level ground – refer to the manufacturer’s pictograms on the side of the ladder. Use proprietary levelling devices, not ad-hoc packing such as bricks, blocks, timbers etc
- On clean, solid surfaces (paving slabs, floors etc). These need to be clean (no oil, moss or leaf litter) and free of loose material (sand, packaging materials etc) so the feet can grip. Shiny floor surfaces can be slippery even without contamination
- Where they will not be struck by vehicles (protect the area using suitable barriers or ones)
- Where they will not be pushed over by other hazards such as doors or windows, i.e., secure the doors (not fire exits) and windows where possible
- Where the public are prevented from using it, walking underneath it or being at risk because they are too near (use barriers, cones or, as a last resort, a person standing guard at the base)
- Where it has been secured.

What are the options for securing ladders?

The options are as follows:

- Tie the ladder to a suitable point, making sure both stiles are tied
- Where this is not practical, secure with an effective ladder stability device
- If this is not possible, then securely wedge the ladder, e.g., wedge the stiles against a wall
- If you can’t achieve any of these options, foot the ladder (someone to stand on the bottom rung). Footing is the last resort.

What about the condition of the equipment?

Ladders and step ladders owned by the hall must only be used when they are suitable for the work task and in a safe condition before use.

Only use ladders or stepladders that have no visible defects. They should always have a pre-use checked before each use. AVH management committee must be informed immediately if the ladder/stepladder fails any checks

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