

I'm not a bot



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) Revised Walking Working Standards requirements for fixed ladders took effect in 2018, but even in 2025 many people aren't aware how those new standards relate to fixed ladders. If you missed the change or are looking for a starter list of pertinent fixed ladder dimensions to ensure compliance, keep reading, and don't forget to download our guide to fixed and portable ladders, too. Below is a quick punch list of five important measurements to check to ensure compliance: Ladder Height: 24 Feet The easiest and most publicized change has to do with ladders that extend 24 feet or more above a lower level. Ladders that are 24 feet or higher can no longer use safety cages as a means of protecting workers. Ladders that were newly installed or altered after November 19, 2018, require a ladder safety system or personal fall arrest system. 2036: Final ladder cage phase-out For existing fixed or permanently mounted ladders that extend 24 feet above a lower level, OSHA developed a timeline to phase out the use of ladder cages as a means of fall protection. Ladders installed before November 19, 2018, are exempt from the requirement until 2036. IMPORTANT: Any portion of an existing ladder that is replaced or repaired must be equipped with a ladder safety system or personal fall arrest system. The final deadline for installing a ladder safety system or personal fall arrest system for all ladders is November 18, 2036. Don't wait until then to update your ladder to meet requirements. Not only is it in the highest interest of your employees to have a system that actually prevents falls, but if too many companies wait until the last minute, demand will only outpace supply leading to delays, backorders, and potential compliance issues. Ladder Rung Width: 16 Inches Per OSHA 1910.23(b)(4), ladder rungs, steps, and cleats must have a minimum clear width of 16 inches (measured before installation of ladder safety systems) for fixed ladders. Although it's a current OSHA requirement, our fall protection inspection teams still see ladders that do not meet this minimum standard. Chances are good that you may have heard about the program to do away with the cage, but if you haven't checked up on your climbing width, it may mean your fixed ladders that extend 24 feet or more above a lower level are still not compliant. "How wide should my ladder be?" may differ depending on what kind of lifeline system you have on your ladder. For example, we recommend a wider climbing surface to accommodate a ladder lifeline system and to make the ladder easier to climb. The image below shows Diversified Fall Protections EZ Series Roof Access Ladder Systems, which have a 20-inch climbing width. Ladder Stand-Off Clearance: 7 Inches Above Ladder Pitch: Fixed ladders should not have a pitch greater than 90 degrees. Side Rails or Grab Bars: Extend 42" above the landing or access level. Ladder Design Criteria - Be sure to check the latest OSHA regulations. An employer's obligation to provide fall protection for fixed ladders is called out in 29 CFR 1910.28(b)(2) to have fall protection and falling object protection. This section of the code states that a fall arrest system or ladder safety system is required for all fixed ladders that extend more than 24 feet above a lower level. Existing ladders that extend more than 24 feet may have a cage or well until November 18, 2036, at which point they must be replaced with a fall arrest system or ladder safety system. The criteria for fall arrest systems, ladder safety systems, cages, and wells is specified in 29 CFR 1910.29. Fall protection systems and falling object protection criteria and practices. Help make Arctoolbox better for everyone. If you found an error or you want information in this article (even if it's just a minor typo), please let us know. Receive a curated email with industry news focusing on practice, leadership, technology, and career growth. The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) plays a crucial role in shaping safety standards across various industries by providing a framework for Standards Developing Organizations (SDOs) to create and maintain standards. While ANSI does not directly develop standards itself, its endorsement of standards developed by SDOs lends credibility and influence to these guidelines. This article explores the significance of ANSI standards, particularly in relation to workplace safety and their alignment with OSHA regulations. ANSI and Workplace Safety (Video link) ANSI standards are instrumental in promoting safety and consistency in workplace environments. Unlike OSHA regulations, which are mandatory and enforceable by law, ANSI standards are voluntary. However, adherence to ANSI standards is highly encouraged as they are often adopted by regulatory bodies like OSHA, thereby influencing legal requirements. This dual approach complying with both mandatory OSHA regulations and voluntary ANSI standards enhances safety measures, reduces injuries, and fosters a more secure workplace environment overall. ANSI A14.3-2008: A Comprehensive Standard for Fixed Ladders One prominent example of an ANSI standard relevant to workplace safety is ANSI A14.3-2008, titled American National Standard for Ladders-Fixed-Safety Requirements. This standard provides detailed safety requirements specifically for fixed ladders, addressing dimensional specifications and design considerations crucial for ladder specifier and building designers alike. Key Dimensional Requirements from ANSI A14.3-2008 Here are some key dimensional requirements outlined in ANSI A14.3-2008: Rung and Step Spacing: The first rungs spacing from the ground should be within 14 inches (35 cm), with subsequent vertical spacing between rungs set at 12 inches (30 cm). Minimum inside clear width of step surfaces should be 16 inches (40 cm). Side Rails/Side Rails: Side rails on through or side-step ladders must extend at least 3 feet 6 inches (106 cm) above the top of the access or landing platform. For through ladder extensions, side rails should be flared to provide clearance between 24 inches (60 cm) and 30 inches (76 cm). Extension and Grab Bars: Ladder extensions above access or landing platforms can continue rung spacing horizontally or provide vertical grab bars with the same lateral spacing as rung legs. Grab bars must extend at least 3 feet 6 inches (106 cm) above the access or landing platform. Clearances: A minimum perpendicular distance of 30 inches is required from the centerline of ladder steps or rungs to the nearest permanent object on the climbing side. Clearance to the nearest permanent object behind the ladder should be no less than 7 inches (18 cm). Step-Across Distance: Sidestep ladders at access points to platforms should provide a step-across distance between 15 inches (38 cm) minimum and 20 inches (50 cm) maximum from the ladders centerline. Enhancing Safety through Compliance By integrating ANSI standards into workplace safety protocols, employers demonstrate a commitment to maintaining high safety standards beyond basic regulatory requirements. Designing and implementing structures and equipment in accordance with ANSI standards not only mitigates risks but also contributes to a safer and more efficient work environment. Moreover, aligning with the most stringent standards, whether OSHA-mandated or ANSI-recommended, enhances comprehensive protection for workers and reduces the likelihood of workplace incidents. In conclusion, while OSHA sets the legal framework for workplace safety, ANSI standards provide essential voluntary guidelines that complement regulatory requirements. Embracing both ensures a holistic approach to safety management, fostering a workplace culture focused on the well-being and security of all employees. By staying informed and implementing these standards, companies uphold their responsibility to create safer working conditions and promote sustainable operational practices. EN131 standard for portable steps and ladders. While BS2037 and BS1129 have been withdrawn, ladders originally made to these standards prior to their withdrawal may still be used (subject to following user instructions and guidance on safe use). View a printable version of the whole guide Home Ladderstore Blog Ladder Standards Cheat Sheet December 9, 2022 As you may be aware, ladder standards changed in 2019 from EN131 Professional and Class 1 for industrial use. From 2018 Class 1 for portable ladders has been withdrawn and there are now two standards, EN131 Non-Professional and EN131 Professional, however, there is still confusion over the standards across our ranges. We often get customers asking for an EN131 Podium or Warehouse Step, which suggests there is still confusion when it comes to standards. This cheat sheet aims to help with this and gives you information on which standards to look out for when purchasing various categories of steps. Well first start from the beginning, explaining what ladder standards are and explaining why they are important before discussing portable ladders, warehouse steps, loft ladders, podiums & towers. What is a ladder standard? Ladder standards are a collection of agreed-upon specifications that influence how a product is designed, manufactured, and used. Ladder standards are established to make ladders safer and keep the end user safe. Ladder standards are typically created by the governing body which understands how the products should be used and can be improved from a safety perspective. Why are ladder standards important? Ladder standards are important as certified products offer maximum safety and comfort to an end user when working at height, preventing falls and injury. Unfortunately, accidents still do occur when using certified products, however, this is typically down to user error, which suggests how important competency and training are. Ladder standards in part can also help when selecting the right equipment for the job. For example, in the case of a portable ladder, a domestic ladder certified to EN131 Non-Professional could be the perfect choice for changing lightbulbs or for a spot of decorating on an infrequent basis, however heavier use and in all businesses EN131 Professional is the only ladder standard that should be used for portable ladders. When purchasing a ladder to a standard be sure to purchase from a reputable retailer and if unsure request the testing certificate. All ladders that are certified go through rigorous testing to ensure they pass the requirements. EN131 Changes of 2018As we mentioned above, standards for portable ladders ie step ladders, extension ladders, telescopic ladders ect have recently been changed. In previous years (before the change) there were three standards of portable ladders. These were Class 3 for domestic use, EN131 for trade and professional use and Class 1 for industrial use. From 2018 Class 1 for portable ladders has been withdrawn and there are now two standards, EN131 Non-Professional and EN131 Professional. What does it mean to have a ladder tested to the EN131 standard? If your ladder has been tested to BS EN131, it means it complies with the British portable ladder standard. The EN131 standard improves ladder safety by making them wider, stronger (up to a weight limit of 150kg), and sturdier, with new stabiliser bars at the base. If the ladder is longer than 3m. For more detail on what EN131 entails check out our blog post. Are you puzzled by EN131. Below we will continue this article by looking at the different product categories on our website and what standard you should purchase too. Step Ladders, Extension Ladders, Combination Ladders, Single Section LaddersClassification: EN131 Professional / EN131 Non-ProfessionalStep ladders, extension ladders and combination ladders are all portable ladders and therefore fall under either EN131 Professional or EN131 Non-Professional. This classification has been made quite simple to understand; if you are buying for use in a business you purchase to the EN131 Professional standard, if you are buying for use in a domestic setting for around the home, EN131 Non-Professional is the standard to purchase. EN131 Professional and Non-Professional are both tested to a maximum capacity of 150kg, the difference in certification being how many times they are put through the testing and how much strain the ladder must undergo, for example, to pass EN131 Non-Professional standards the ladder must go through 10,000 cycles, EN131 Professional must survive a 50,000-cycle test. Other tests include strength tests, torsion tests, bend tests, slip tests and much more, the main difference between the new standard from an end user point of view is that all leaning ladders over 3m now require a stabiliser bar. Telescopic LaddersClassification: EN131-6Telescopic ladders come under the certification of EN131 Part 6, this is the section of the EN131 standard specifically for telescopic ladders. Again, when a telescopic ladder is certified to this standard if the length of the ladder is 3m or over a stabiliser bar is required. Other requirements for a telescopic ladder to comply to EN131 Part 6 is to ensure that each rung is locked when the ladder is in use and there is a visible sign of this. Self-closing of the ladder is also popular with the EN131-6 standard as it avoids hands being trapped when the ladder collapses. As with other ladders in the EN131 category these ladders then also undergo strength, durability and slip tests. Telescopic ladders have been at the forefront of testing by the Test and Research Centre and the Ladder Association recently due to inadequate and unsafe product flooding the market in well-known retail brands on supermarkets. When purchasing a telescopic ladder, check this conforms to part six of the standard and if in any doubt request the certificate. Portable Roof LaddersClassification: BS 8634 Portable roof ladders? There is currently no standard for roof ladders however this is currently being reviewed by BSI and the Ladder Association. More information to follow. Folding Step StoolsClassification: EN14183Folding step stools come under the EN14183 category. The EN13183 is a European standard, and this is the category that covers step stools only. The step stools can be made from steel, aluminium, or plastic, they can be up to 1m tall and have a maximum load of 150kg. The standard specifies the requirements for the below to meet the standard: Functional dimensions, designations, and materialsType (Fixed/ Folding, Stair type steps, fold out, dome out)MaterialsSlip resistanceVertical static loadSeat suitabilityHop UpsClassification: No ClassificationHop Ups don't have a standard to be manufactured or tested to. When purchasing a hop up or work platform ensure that you purchase from a reputable manufacturer. By using hop ups from the likes of Werner, Youngman, Hymer, Clow and Chase you can have peace of mind that the materials and strength have been considered when manufactured. Warehouse StepsClassification: BS EN131-7 / No ClassificationWarehouse steps are not as straightforward as other ladders when it comes to classification. In 2016 standards were amended and EN131 Part 7 included mobile steps. Which specifies wheels / castors in the standards. However, the standard was not ratified. This means that many companies do not test their warehouse steps to this standard. Redhill warehouse steps are currently one of the only UK manufacturers that have steps available to this specification. Other warehouse steps are like roof ladders, they are built to cover most elements of EN131 as they technically have no standard to comply to. The warehouse steps on our site that are not covered by EN131-7, we have only added to the site when we've reviewed the quality in person. The main standards covering mobile warehouse steps are the British Standard EN131-7: 2015. These only cover platform lengths between 400 & 1000mm. Loft LaddersClassification: EN 14975 / No ClassificationLoft ladders are another classification that is not a legal requirement and therefore you'll find many loft ladders do not have a standard. Some loft ladders from the most well-known brands including Werner and Youngman have ranges that conform to EN 14975. This standard covers loads and the operation of the ladder to ensure they are safe for use. Something else to consider when purchasing a loft ladder is fire rating and other elements of the building regulations. Mobile TowersClassification: EN 1004Mobile towers should conform to EN 1004, this is the only way you can ensure that your mobile tower is safe to use. When purchasing to EN 1004 your tower should be; marked with the correct EN1004 label, have safety trapdoors with entry and exits, have the correct sizes of stabilisers to prevent overturning, and have all guardrails present with the correct heights. Requirements of the EN 1004 Standard include; Dimensional requirementsGuardrail deflection and strengthPlatform deflectionTower deflectionSafe assembly, alteration and dismantling methods are shown in the instruction manual. Podium StepsClassification: BS 8620When purchasing a new podium step the classification to look for is BS 8620. If you currently have a podium step and it's certified to PAS 250 do not worry, this standard has since been replaced, but if your PAS 250 podium step is still maintained and inspected, and deemed to be in good condition you can continue to use this. The BS 8620 classification has increased dimensional changes to the side protection and now undergoes stricter testing. The general requirements for BS 8620 include: Dimensional requirementsProduct strengthOverturningRigidityAccess strengthResistance to slidingStability when ascending and descendingGuardrail strength and deflectionWorking platform strength and deflectionMobility device (caster) strength and retention.Talk With One Of Our Ladder ExpertsAt Ladderstore, we have a team of ladder training and qualified staff who can advise you on the best ladders for the job. We strive to provide the safest product for the task at hand, which includes ensuring that all the products we supply are certified to the most recent standards, and we can even quote for bespoke solutions for those more unique queries. Give one of our team a call on 01204 590 232 to learn more or contact us with your working at height concerns, and one of our team members will respond with the ideal working at height solution. Ladders must be built to meet strength, stability, and slip-resistant standards, with rungs, side rails, and cleats designed to handle loads and prevent accidents. Ladders are categorized by their duty ratings load capacity (e.g., Type IAA for 170 kg) to match tasks and prevent overloading. Fixed ladders exceeding 24 feet must have fall protection, such as ladder safety systems, personal fall arrest systems, or guardrails to ensure worker safety. Regular inspections of ladders are required to check for damage or defects like cracked rungs or loose parts. Ladders were the third most frequently cited standard in 2023, with roofing contractors being the industry most often cited for violations. These violations typically occur when ladders are improperly secured, placed, or used. Published reports also estimate that ladder-related injuries cost U.S. employers approximately \$24 billion each year, factoring in medical expenses, lost productivity, legal liabilities, and other related costs. These statistics highlight the urgent need for employers to fully understand and implement ladder safety guidelines set by regulatory organizations like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). These guidelines aim to reduce workplace hazards, lower the risk of injuries, and promote safe ladder practices when using ladders. OSHA sets specific standards for ladder safety in the workplace, including ladder design, inspection, and maintenance. Meanwhile, ANSI supplements these requirements by offering additional safety recommendations that align with OSHA standards. This article will discuss in detail OSHA standards for ladders and ANSI ladder requirements, as well as the components of a ladder safety program. ANSI Ladder Safety RequirementsThe ANSI ASC A14 standards provide detailed guidelines covering every aspect of ladder safety, including design, construction, testing, usage, marking, and labeling. Here is a review of each requirement: Safe ConstructionThe construction of ladders must follow strict guidelines to ensure they can withstand typical usage scenarios without compromising stability or integrity. ANSI requires that ladders be free from defects and that all components be securely fastened together. Ladder components must also be designed to withstand the stresses placed on them during normal use. For example, ladder rungs must be uniformly spaced and capable of supporting the required load without bending or breaking. Additionally, the joints and fasteners must be secure to prevent wobbling or collapse under stress. These standards aim to reduce the risk of mechanical failure during use. Ladder MaterialsANSI-ASC Ladder Standards require ladders to be constructed from materials that can withstand the weight and intended use of the ladder. These materials must also be resistant to damage from environmental factors, such as sunlight and moisture. Common materials include: Aluminum: Lightweight and corrosion-resistant, aluminum is ideal for general use but is unsuitable for work near electrical sources because it conducts electricity. Fiberglass: Non-conductive and durable, fiberglass ladders are preferred for electrical work and harsh environments where exposure to moisture or chemicals is common. Wood: A traditional option, wooden ladders are non-conductive when dry but require regular maintenance to prevent rot, warping, or splitting. Steel: Steel metal ladders are extremely durable and capable of withstanding heavy loads, making them ideal for industrial environments. However, they are heavier than other options and prone to rust if not properly maintained or used in corrosive environments. Designing RequirementsDesign standards for ladders address several important aspects to improve safety and usability. First, ladders must be tall enough to allow the user to work comfortably without standing on the top rung or step, as doing so compromises stability and increases the risk of falls. For extension ladders, ANSI recommends following the 4-1 rule: For every 4 feet of ladder height, the base should be placed 1 foot away from the supporting wall or structure. This provides optimal stability and reduces the likelihood of tipping. ANSI has also established duty ratings for ladders, which indicate the maximum weight a ladder can safely support. This weight includes the user as well as any tools or materials being carried. These ratings are essential for selecting the right ladder for a specific task and workload, reducing the risk of overloading, which could lead to structural failure and accidents. Here are the ANSI classifications: Type IAA (Extra Heavy Duty): Supports up to 375 lbs, suitable for demanding industrial tasks. Type IA (Extra Heavy Duty): Supports up to 300 lbs, ideal for heavy-duty use. Type I (Heavy Duty): Supports up to 250 lbs, often used in professional settings. Type II (Medium Duty): Supports up to 225 lbs, typically for light commercial or residential use. Type III (Light Duty): Supports up to 200 lbs, intended for household tasks. The duty rating of a ladder is clearly marked on its label, allowing users to quickly identify whether it meets the requirements of their job. Marking RequirementsANSI-ASC Ladder Standards require that ladders be clearly marked with important information, such as the weight capacity, intended use, and manufacturer's name and address. This information helps ensure that ladders are used appropriately and that any necessary repairs or replacements are made. Such information can be written down on ANSI safety inspection tags and other appropriate equipment tags. A safety sign, similar to the one shown above, provides an additional layer of protection by reminding users of proper ladder practices and potential hazards. Test RequirementsANSI-ASC Ladder Standards require that ladders undergo rigorous testing to ensure their safety and durability. Design Verification Tests: These are conducted during the initial development of a ladder to confirm that its design meets safety and performance standards. Key parameters include weight capacity, structural integrity, and resistance to tipping. Quality Control Tests: Manufacturers perform these tests on production units to ensure consistency and reliability. They include checks for material quality, weld integrity, uniform rung spacing, and overall functionality. In-Service Tests: Users are responsible for conducting periodic checks to confirm that the ladder remains safe during its operational lifespan. These tests include inspecting for wear, damage, or environmental impact, such as corrosion or warping. Slip Resistance Tests: These evaluate the ladder's ability to resist slipping, including load capacity, durability, stability, and resistance to bending and twisting. Ladders must also be tested for slip resistance and durability in various environmental conditions. When Should Ladders Not Be Used?Not all situations call for a ladder. If the ground is uneven, the weather is poor, or your reach is overreaching, which could lead to structural failure and accidents. 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