



## TOP COMPLIANCE (Pty) Ltd

**Your Business' Safety Is Our Concern**

**QSE B-BBEE - Level Four**

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**March 2019**

### **Ladder safety at work.**

With ladders being the biggest cause of workplace fatalities involving working at heights, it is vital, that all employers and employees who work at heights are familiar with the relevant legislation and understand the hazards and risks associated with working on a ladder or similar device.

The Department of Labour has taken steps to ensure safety by redefining the term working at heights. Previously defined as work taking place from a height of at least 2 meters off the ground. Now, working at heights applies to any work taking place any time from when a worker leaves the ground to do a certain job. Standing on a crate or chair is working at heights.

The challenge comes in when employees use step ladders, ladders, scaffold and other elevated work platforms to perform a task. The risk is increased when it is a quick job such as changing a light bulb. No one believes that anything can go wrong. It will only take two minutes why check the equipment. This kind of thinking is dangerous as fatalities can occur at any time even while doing a very simple everyday task.

### **What is a ladders and a fixed ladder?**

A "ladder" is a piece of equipment consisting of a series of bars or steps between two upright lengths of wood, metal, or rope, used for climbing up or down something.

A "fixed ladder" means a ladder including individual rung ladders, permanently attached to a structure, building or piece of equipment.

### **What does the law say?**

Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993: General Safety Regulations - Work in elevated positions #6:

*6. No employer shall require or permit any person to work in an elevated position, and no person shall work in an elevated position, unless such work is performed safely from a ladder or scaffolding, or from a position where such person has been made as safe as if he were working from scaffolding.*

Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993: General Safety Regulations - Work in elevated positions #13A:

*13A (1) An employee shall ensure that every ladder is constructed of sound material and is suitable for the purpose for which it is used, and –  
(a) is fitted with non-skid devices at the bottom ends and hooks or similar devices at the upper ends of the stiles which shall ensure the stability of the ladder during normal use; or*

*(b) is so lashed, held or secured whilst being used as to ensure the stability of the ladder under all conditions and at all times.*

*(2) No employer shall use a ladder, or permit it to be used, if it -*

*(a)(i) has rungs fastened to the stiles only by means of nails, screws, spikes or in like manner; or*

*(ii) has rungs which have not been properly let into the stiles: Provided that in the case of welded ladder or ladders of which the rungs are bolted or riveted to the stiles, the rungs need not be let into the sides; or*

*(b) has damaged stiles, or damaged or missing rungs.*

*(3) No employer may permit that -*

*(a) a ladder which is required to be leaned against an object for support be used which is longer than 9 m; and*

*(b) except with the approval of an inspector, the reach of a ladder be extended by fastening together two or more ladders: Provided that the provisions of this subregulation shall not apply to extension of free-standing ladders.*

*(4) In the case of wooden ladders the employer shall ensure that -*

*(a) the ladders are constructed of straight grained wood, free from defects, and with the grain running in the length of the stiles and rungs; and*

*(b) the ladders are not painted or covered in any manner, unless it has been established that there are no cracks or other inherent weaknesses: Provided that ladders may be treated with oil or covered with clear varnish or wood preservative.*

*(5) When work is done from a ladder, the employer shall -*

*(a) take special precautionary measures to prevent articles from falling off; and*

*(b) provide suitable sheaths or receptacles in which hand tools shall be kept when not being used.*

*(6) An employer shall ensure that a fixed ladder which exceeds 5 m in length and is attached to a vertical structure with an inclination to the horizontal level of 75 or more -*

*(a) has its rungs at least 150 mm away from the structure to which the ladder is attached; and*

*(b) is provided with a cage which -*

*(i) extends from a point not exceeding 2.5 m from the lower level to a height of at least 900 mm above the top level served by the ladder; and*

*(ii) shall afford firm support along its whole length for the back of the person climbing the ladder, and for which purpose no part of the cage shall be more than 700 mm away from the level of the rungs:*

*Provided that the foregoing provisions of paragraph (b) shall not apply if platforms, which are spaced not more than 8 m apart and suitable for persons to rest on, are provided.*

## **What are the responsibilities of the employer?**

**Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993: # 8. General duties of employers to their employees:**

- 1. Every employer shall provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to the health of his employees.*
- 2. Without derogating from the generality of an employer's duties under subsection (1), the matters to which those duties refer include in particular-*

- a. *the provision and maintenance of systems of work, plant and machinery that, as far as is reasonably practicable, are safe and without risks to health;*
- b. *taking such steps as may be reasonably practicable to eliminate or mitigate any hazard or potential hazard to the safety or health of employees, before resorting to personal protective equipment;*
- c. *making arrangements for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the production, processing, use, handling, storage or transport of articles or substances;*
- d. *establishing, as far as is reasonably practicable, what hazards to the health or safety of persons are attached to any work which is performed, any article or substance which is produced, processed, used, handled, stored or transported and any plant or machinery which is used in his business, and he shall, as far as is reasonably practicable, further establish what precautionary measures should be taken with respect to such work, article, substance, plant or machinery in order to protect the health and safety of persons, and he shall provide the necessary means to apply such precautionary measures;*
- e. *providing such information, instructions, training and supervision as may be necessary to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety at work of his employees;*
- f. *as far as is reasonably practicable, not permitting any employee to do any work or to produce, process, use, handle, store or transport any article or substance or to operate any plant or machinery, unless the precautionary measures contemplated in paragraphs (b) and (d), or any other precautionary measures which may be prescribed, have been taken;*
- g. *taking all necessary measures to ensure that tire requirements of this Act are complied with by every person in his employment or on premises under his control where plant or machinery is used;*
- h. *enforcing such measures as may be necessary in the interest of health and safety;*
- i. *ensuring that work is performed and that plant or machinery is used under the general supervision of a person trained to understand the hazards associated with it and who have the authority to ensure that precautionary measures taken by the employer are implemented; and*
- j. *causing all employees to be informed regarding the scope of their authority as contemplated in section 37 (1) (b).*

**The employer needs to ensure that the following has been done:**

1. A proper Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (HIRA) must be done by a competent person, and including staff who are familiar with the task being assessed.
2. Safe Working Procedures (SWP) to be implemented and the relevant staff to be trained accordingly. Proof to be kept that the staff have been trained to the specific HIRA and SWP.

3. Implement a checklist to check all the ladders on a monthly basis.
4. All ladders need to be named or numbered.
5. They need to be on an inventory list.
6. Planned Job Observations (PJO) to be done to ensure that staff follow SWP.
7. Supervision to prevent staff from misusing or incorrectly using ladders or similar equipment.
8. Consequences for staff failing to follow procedures as per the companies Disciplinary Code of Conduct.
9. Prior to each use the staff need to check key points of ladders e.g. anti-slip feet, rungs, styles, spreaders etc.

Please ensure that you do make use of ladders where required. Never use a ladder other than its intended purpose. Remember that lives could depend on the proper use of this piece of equipment at work. Through this article I would like to encourage you to take the time to ensure that all ladders on site are in a good condition and properly used by workers or contractors at work. Prevention is better than cure.

**FREE ladder and fixed ladder checklists:**

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**Public courses**

**For all the dates this year**

|               |          |                                          |
|---------------|----------|------------------------------------------|
| 10 April      | Pretoria | Safety Rep - OHS Act & legal liability   |
| 15 April      | Pretoria | Basic firefighting & emergency plan      |
| 16 & 17 April | Pretoria | Level 1 first aid                        |
| 6 May         | Pretoria | Basic firefighting & emergency plan      |
| 16 May        | Pretoria | OHS Act & Responsibilities of Management |

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 20 May                                                                | Pretoria                                                                                                                                                 | Safety Rep - OHS Act & legal liability |
| 23 & 24 May                                                           | Pretoria                                                                                                                                                 | Level 1 first aid                      |
| Corporate and Private training courses as below:                      |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First Aid Courses:                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 1                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 2                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 3                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 1 & 2                                                |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 2 & 3                                                |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First aid: Level 1, 2 & 3                                             |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Child and infant CPR & choking                                        |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Adult CPR & choking                                                   |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Adult CPR & choking and AED                                           |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Occupational Health and Safety Courses                                |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| OHS Act & SHERQ representative                                        |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| The Occupational Health + Safety Act - responsibilities of management |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Food facility health & safety course                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Basic ladder safety                                                   |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Fire Fighting and Prevention Courses                                  |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Basic firefighting                                                    |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Basic firefighting with emergency action planning                     |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| Basic firefighting with fire extinguisher practical                   |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| SKILLS PROGRAMS                                                       |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| First Aid Level 1,2 & 3 - HW/SP/1601190 – NEW REQUIREMENT             |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 119567                                                             | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                                                                                                      |                                        |
| US 120496                                                             | Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace                                                                                     |                                        |
| US 376480                                                             | Provide first aid as an advanced first responder                                                                                                         |                                        |
| First Aider - HW/SP/1202005                                           |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 119567                                                             | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                                                                                                      |                                        |
| US 120496                                                             | Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace                                                                                     |                                        |
| US 13915                                                              | Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of HIV/AIDS in a workplace, and its effects on a business sub-sector, own organisation and a specific workplace. |                                        |
| First Aid (Basic) - HW/SP/150795                                      |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 119567                                                             | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                                                                                                      |                                        |
| US 9964                                                               | Apply health and safety to a work area                                                                                                                   |                                        |
| Health, Safety and Fire Combination - HW/SP/1510179                   |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 9964                                                               | Apply health and safety to a work area                                                                                                                   |                                        |
| US 119567                                                             | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                                                                                                      |                                        |
| US 120331                                                             | Demonstrate knowledge pertaining to fires in working places                                                                                              |                                        |
| Workplace SHE Rep - HW/SP/1510182                                     |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 9964                                                               | Apply health and safety to a work area                                                                                                                   |                                        |
| US 259639                                                             | Explain basic health and safety principles in and around the workplace                                                                                   |                                        |
| First Aid and Safety Representative - HW/SP/1510183                   |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |
| US 9964                                                               | Apply health and safety to a work area                                                                                                                   |                                        |
| US 119567                                                             | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                                                                                                      |                                        |
| Safety Incident Investigation and inspections - HW/SP/1511233         |                                                                                                                                                          |                                        |

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|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| US 259617                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Conduct investigation into workplace safety, health + environmental incidents |
| US 259619                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Conduct workplace Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) inspections            |
| <b>First Aid and Firefighting - HW/SP/1511239</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                               |
| US 120496                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace          |
| US 13961                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Demonstrate knowledge and use of hand operated firefighting equipment         |
| <b>Fire and Rescue Skills Programme - HW/SP/1604338</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                               |
| US 252250                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Apply firefighting techniques                                                 |
| US 119567                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                           |
| <b>Emergency First Aider - HW/SP/1605377</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                               |
| US 119567                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Perform basic life support and first aid procedures                           |
| US 120496                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Provide risk-based primary emergency care/first aid in the workplace          |
| <b>Safety Management - HW/SP/1601159</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                               |
| US 9964                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Apply health and safety to a work area                                        |
| US 259639                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Explain basic health and safety principles in and around the workplace        |
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