Safety Bulletin

To:	**All Operational Colleagues and Service Partners**
Issued by:	**Health, Safety, Training**
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Use of Ladders

A serious incident recently occurred in another BHE company, where an overhead line colleague fell from height resulting in neck and spinal injuries. The fall occurred when the Linesperson was using a step ladder to access a flat roof. Due to the height of the roof, this required the colleague to stand on the top step of the step ladder. As the Linesperson was moving from the flat roof the step ladder became unstable, leading to them falling 2.7m to the ground.

The risk of using the step ladder in this way would have been obvious if a suitable and sufficient risk assessment had been carried out. An alternative means of access should have been used.

Key reminders for working at height

- Carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Work in accordance with your training and our Working at Height handbook (version 3, April 2021).

Below are some important guidelines from our handbook regarding the safe use of step ladders:

Correct methods of using step ladders

Remember that three points of contact should be maintained by both feet and torso, leaving both hands free to carry out the task.

DO...

- Ensure the steps are the correct size for the task.
- Ensure the step ladders are tested and correctly colour coded.
- Inspect the step ladders for any damage or defects before use.
- Make sure the step ladders are fully open and facing the direction of work.
- Ensure the step ladders are stable and positioned on solid ground.

Incorrect methods of using step ladders
Avoid working sideways as this reduces the stability of the steps

DON'T...

- Don't use step ladders that are damaged or out of date.
- For trestle steps (swingback) do not stand on the top three treads.
- For platform steps do not stand on the top two treads.
- Don't work on a step ladder that is folded up against an object.
- Don't lean away from the stiles of the step ladder while working.

Don't stand step ladders on other objects.