



South African Maritime Safety Authority

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Marine Notice No. 11 of 2017

Portable Ladders

TO MASTERS OF ALL SHIPS IN SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS, SHIP OPERATORS, OWNERS, MANAGERS AND SHIP'S AGENTS, STEVEDORES AND SHIP REPAIR COMPANIES, LABOUR BROKERS AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Summary

This marine notice provides guidance for the safe use of portable ladders brought onboard ships for use by stevedores and or shore contractors.

SAMSA notes with concern the number of serious injuries that have occurred to stevedores whilst using portable ladders onboard vessels.

The following is to be noted:

1. Portable ladders should only be used when there is no safer alternative means for accessing heights.
2. To ensure that the safety of the portable ladder can be verified, stevedores should only use equipment that has been provided by their own company.

The following legislation is applicable to portable ladders brought onboard the vessel:

Maritime Occupational Safety Regulations, 1993: Duties of employers and employees

3(1)(h) Every employer shall ensure that machinery and equipment which is brought on board a vessel and which does not form part of that vessel's machinery or equipment complies with the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993 (Act No. 85 of 1993);

Occupational Health & Safety Act, 1993: General Safety Regulations 13A Ladders

- (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 stiles; 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 sub regulation 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.

South African Ports Cargo Handling Code of Practice

3.4.3 Workers using a ladder must:

- a) Have both hands free for climbing up and down;
- b) Face the ladder when climbing up and down;
- c) Avoid wearing footwear that is slippery;
- d) Use belts or other suitable means to carry any object they may need

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