

This tragic fatal incident reflects a failure in safety planning and a breach of the duty of care by the principal and employer of the air-conditioning technician.

CONTROL MEASURES

In light of the gaps identified in the incident and the risk factors associated with ladder use outlined in [WSHN: Importance of Safe and Right Use of Ladders at the Workplace \(2025/WSHN/02\)](#), workplaces must implement the following measures:

- conduct a risk assessment to identify safety risks that may affect anyone involved in the workplace activities, as required by the [Workplace Safety and Health \(Risk Management\) Regulations](#);
- establish and implement a fall prevention plan for WAH carried out for every workplace as mandated by the [Workplace Safety and Health \(Work at Heights\) Regulations, 2025](#); and
- develop and implement Safe Work Procedures for ladder use in relation to WAH.

Before Use

- **Avoid or minimise WAH whenever it is reasonably practicable to do so.** Use safer alternatives, such as certified mobile elevated working platforms, scaffolds or step ladders, whenever practicable.
- **Implement a permit-to-work (PTW) system** in the following situations:
 - (a) On elevated workplaces, near openings or edges, or in any locations (above or below ground) that involve hazardous work at heights where there is a risk of a person falling more than 3 metres, as required by the [WSH \(WAH\) Regulations, 2025](#); and
For scaffolds (where there is potential for falls exceeding 2 metres, as required by the [WSH \(Construction\) Regulations](#).
- **Never use portable ladders or boxes on scaffolds** to gain additional height. Only use scaffold ladders that are properly secured and designed for safe access between levels.
- Choose ladders that are **well-constructed, made of sound materials, have adequate strength, are free from patent defects, and are suitable and safe** for the intended purpose.
- Ensure the surface upon which any ladder (except for fixed ladders) rests is **stable, level, firm, and strong enough** to support the ladder safely.
- **Inspect ladders regularly**; do not use damaged, homemade, or makeshift ladders, as they can be unsafe and may collapse under load. Use only commercial-grade ladders.
- **Secure the work area with barricades** as necessary to manage traffic and **segregate the work zone**.

- When using a ladder that leans against a wall, building, structure or tree, ensure it is at a **safe angle of 75° (4:1 ratio) for optimal stability, reducing the risk of slipping or tipping backward**. The ladder should be secured at both the top and bottom. If securing is not possible, implement **a buddy system where a spotter stabilises** the ladder and supports the worker while climbing or descending.
- Ensure **adequate supervision** and that all workers **are trained and informed about the hazards, risks, and controls** associated with safe ladder use. Conduct regular toolbox talks and refresher training sessions.
- Verify that workers are **fit for duty before they begin**, and prevent anyone who is unwell from using ladders.
- Provide workers with **appropriate PPE** such as anti-slip footwear and safety helmets, to reduce the risks of slipping and head injuries.

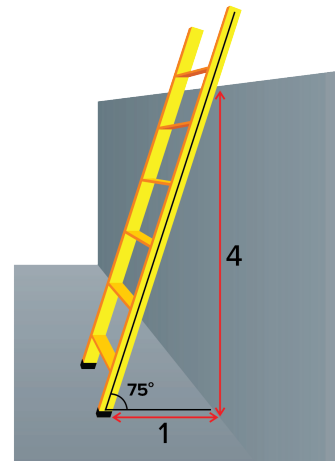


Figure 1: Leaning ladder set at 4:1 ratio about angle of 75°.

During Use

- **Do not carry heavy items** while climbing or descending the ladder.
- **Only one person** is allowed on the ladder at a time, and must **maintain three-point contact** at all times while facing the ladder. This means keeping either two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand on the ladder.
- **Avoid overreaching** while on the ladder.
- **Do not step on the top two rungs** or steps of the ladder. If you need to reach further, reposition the ladder or use a more suitable ladder.
- Never use an A-frame ladder in a **leaning position**, and do not move the ladder while someone is on it.
- **Stop work** if conditions worsen (e.g., strong wind, rain or poor lighting) and inform your supervisor immediately.

After Use

- **Descend safely**, close the ladder, re-check conditions, and **tag it out** if it is damaged.
- Ensure **proper housekeeping** by removing barricades and tidying the area.

By implementing these safety measures, workplaces can improve ladder safety during WAH and reduce the risk of ladder-related incidents and injuries.

FURTHER GUIDANCES

For more information and guidance on WAH and the use of ladders, please refer to the following resources on the SHENA website. These resources will help compliance with the relevant legislation and outline best industry practices:-

- [Workplace Safety and Health \(Work at Heights\) Regulations, 2025](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Health \(Construction\) Regulations](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Health \(Risk Management\) Regulations](#)
- [Code of Practice: Workplace Safety and Health \(Risk Management\)](#)
- [Industry Guidance Note: Work at Height and Working at Height Rescue Plan \(2021/IGN/07\)](#)
- [Industry Guidance Note: Guidance to Permit to Work \(IGN/2020/03\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Health Notice: Importance of Safe and Right Use of Ladders at the Workplace \(2025/WSHN/02\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Health Notice: Urgent Reminder on the Safety Precautions to Prevent Falls from Height \(2024/WSHN/07\)](#)
- [Working at Height Handbook for Supervisors](#)
- [Worksite Safety Handbook](#)
- [Self-Assessment Checklist: Working at Height \(2024/NTI/08\)](#)

SHENA will continue to monitor workplace safety and health through regulatory inspections. All principals, employers, occupiers, self-employed persons, and persons at work are reminded to **review and strengthen their WAH safe work practices for ladder use in the workplace. This is essential to prevent incidents** and to ensure compliance with the [WSHA, Cap 277](#) and its subsidiary regulations. For any reportable incidents, it is a legal requirement under the [WSH \(Incident Reporting\) Regulations](#) to submit the Initial Incident Notification (IIN) **no later than ten (10) days after the accident.**

For further clarification, please submit your enquiries by clicking on “General Enquiries” at the SHENA website: www.shena.gov.bn or contact the SHENA office on the general line at **+673 238 2000 / +673 272 2000** during office hours. SHENA would like to thank all relevant stakeholders for their cooperation in ensuring Brunei Darussalam is a safe place to work and live.

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