



## Assess the risks

Before choosing a ladder or any other type of equipment for working at heights, you must assess the risks. When deciding which type of equipment is safest and most suitable for your task, ask yourself these questions.

### Can the task be done from the ground?

Working at heights always involves the risk of falling, so consider your options before grabbing the nearest ladder. Even when your task is above grade, with the appropriate equipment, it might be possible to get the job done from the ground.

### Are there safer alternatives to using a ladder?

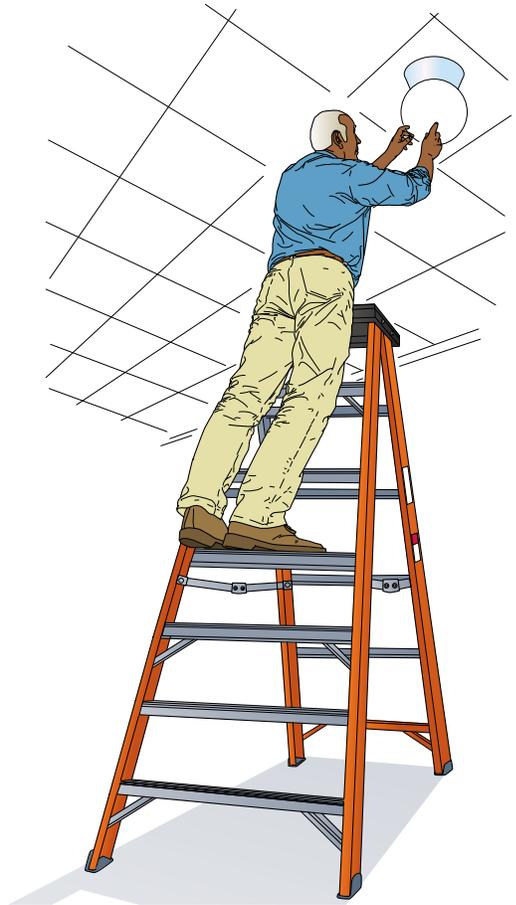
If you can't avoid working at heights, consider using safer alternatives to a ladder, such as a work platform, stairs, or a ramp. Here are some things to think about when deciding which equipment is best for the job.

- The time required to complete the task
- The number of workers who will need to use the equipment
- Whether the equipment will need to be repositioned during the task
- The weight of the tools needed to complete the task
- The materials and equipment needed to complete the task
- Whether heavy or bulky items need to be lifted or positioned
- The height of the work area or task and whether workers will need fall protection
- The physical and environmental conditions in the work area

### When is a ladder suitable?

Ladders may be suitable for

- Accessing a work area, such as a roof, mezzanine, or scaffolding
- Minor maintenance tasks, such as caulking, touch-up painting, inspecting gutters, or other light-duty tasks that take no more than 15 minutes to complete



*Ladders are often suitable for quick, light-duty tasks, such as minor maintenance work.*

If you are a worker and a suitable ladder or work platform isn't available, talk to your supervisor or employer.

For more information, see WorkSafeBC's Ladder Safety Series on WorkSafeBC.com.