

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**



SafetyGuidance

# PortableLadders

- > Ladder standards are changing
- > What does this mean for you?
- > What action do you need to take?

The Ladder Association has played an important part in these changes and welcomes the opportunity to introduce clarity to what this means and what happens next.

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131)

# The changes

## How will a ladder be different?

EN 131 has new requirements that will improve the safety of ladders:



Dimensional changes will improve stability



Increased strength test requirements



New requirements for ladder durability

The changes will help to improve the safety of ladders and also make buying the right ladder much simpler.

BS EN 131\* – the single British & European product standard covering all types of portable ladders (step, extending and combination) has been substantially revised. When a European Standard, or Euro Norme (EN) has been agreed and ratified, all CEN member countries are obliged to adopt that Standard as a national standard, in our case, as a British Standard (BS) and withdraw, or amend, any conflicting national standards. So, the British Standards, BS 2037 and BS 1129 (often referred to as Class 1 and Class 3 ladders) now must be amended to remove conflicting products, which means that, after a transition period, certified ladders from these standards will no longer be available.



\* BS EN 131 is the UK's version of EN 131

# When & how?

## How this will affect you



### Timetable

The revised EN 131 standards are now published and manufacturers are in the process of changing over to new designs, which meet the requirements of the revised standard.

Ladders certified to the withdrawn British Standards, BS 2037 and BS 1129 (often referred to as Class 1 and Class 3 ladders) will no longer be available after a transition period.

### Can I still use my existing ladders?

YES, product standards do not apply retrospectively. So, if they are in good condition, there is no immediate requirement to change your existing ladders just because the product standards are revised or withdrawn.

### Business

- > You should consider updating your purchasing policies to be ready to specify EN 131 Professional ladders when your organisation needs to replace existing ladders or buy new ones.

### Domestic

- > When purchasing new ladders or replacing existing ones, you could buy either EN 131 Non-Professional or Professional ladders - it's up to you. Non-Professional ladders should be perfectly adequate but you might want to consider spending a bit extra to buy a Professional ladder.

### Can I still buy ladders to old standards?

During the transition period you will still be able to buy ladders certified to BS 2037, BS 1129 and the superseded EN 131 as suppliers clear their existing stocks and, whilst this is perfectly acceptable, this will diminish over time as supplies are exhausted.

After that, when you need to replace your existing ladders because they are damaged or unfit for further use, or if you need new ladders, then you should buy ladders with third party product conformity certification to the new standard (see page 4 for our buying guide).

# Buying

## How to shop smart

When you need to replace your existing ladders because they are damaged or unfit for further use, or if you need new ladders, be mindful of these top tips to shopping smart.



[BS EN 131 is the UK's version of EN 131]

- ✓ Shop with a reputable company or specialist ladder supplier
- ✓ Check the specification, label and user instructions for details of compliance with the latest version of EN 131

*PLEASE NOTE: During the transition period you will still be able to buy ladders certified to BS 2037 and BS 1129 as suppliers clear their existing stocks and, whilst this is perfectly acceptable, this will diminish over time as supplies are exhausted.*

- ✓ If you are not sure or you want extra reassurance, ask the supplier for confirmation that the ladder meets all the requirements of the current version of EN 131. Ask the supplier for a copy of the certificate of compliance with the EN 131 standard. This certificate should be issued by an accredited test body (such as BSI, TUV, AFNOR etc.)
- ✓ All EN 131 ladders must be sold with the correct safety labels and a set of user instructions containing comprehensive safety information

**X** It is currently NOT possible to legally CE mark a ladder so if you see a ladder with a CE mark, steer clear and don't buy it!



If you're not sure which product is right for you, contact the Ladder Association.

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131)

# Questions

From changing ladders to retraining

## Wouldn't it just be easier to ban ladders?

No, ladders can often be a sensible and practical option for low-risk and short duration tasks and there are some situations where a ladder may be the only practical possibility. The EN 131 standard will help to ensure that, whilst a ladder may not always be your first option, they remain a viable solution for work at height where alternative forms of access cannot be used.

## What if my company does not want to change ladders?

Well maintained ladders in good condition can still be used. Since it is good practice to specify the latest standard when selecting products, we recommend that companies update their procurement policies at the earliest practical opportunity to be ready for EN 131 implementation.

## Do I need retraining on the new EN 131 ladders?

### Already hold a Ladder Association LadderCard?

You don't need retraining to use the new style ladders (compliant with the new EN 131 standard).

### Not trained?

Ladder Association training equips people to understand the essential points about safe use, handling and storage of ladders, together with potential hazards of their use.

You should make sure that people with sufficient skills, knowledge and experience are employed to perform the task, or, if they are being trained, that they work under the supervision of somebody competent to do it.

### LadderCard

The LadderCard is an effective and widely recognised way of showing proof of training for work at height from ladders and can help you to demonstrate competence as required by regulations.



# Ladder guidance

Key points to remember

*If it's right to use a ladder, use the right ladder and get trained to use it safely*



Carry out a risk assessment before deciding to use a ladder (other equipment may be more appropriate)



Ladders are suitable for low-risk AND short duration tasks (under 30mins)



Always read the user instructions and the safety labels on the ladder

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the  
**LADDER**  
ASSOCIATION



# THIS GAME ISN'T AS EASY AS YOU THINK

Be sure to play a winning game with industry standard training from the Ladder Association



The LadderCard represents demonstrable proof that users are trained to work at height from a ladder and can help to evidence the competence required by the Work at Height Regulations

Don't get caught on a snake. Book a course today with your nearest approved Ladder Association training centre

[www.ladderassociation.org.uk/snakes-ladders](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk/snakes-ladders)

*the*  
**LADDER**  
ASSOCIATION

# The Ladder Association supports ladder users

The Ladder Association is the not-for-profit industry association dedicated to promoting the safe use of ladders.

We represent all aspects of the industry on standards committees in the UK and Europe and collaborate with the Health & Safety Executive, Hire Association Europe and the Access Industry Forum.

## LadderCard courses available:



**Ladder & Stepladder User Course**



**Ladder & Stepladder Inspection Course**



**Working with Steps & Step Stools**



For further copies of this document go to:  
[www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131)

VERSION 1

*the*  
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[www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131](http://www.ladderassociation.org.uk/en131)

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