

Stepping up the ladder regulations: Are you protected?

Arco offers customers free guidance ahead of new European Regulation

The UK's leading safety expert, Arco, is offering its customers free advice on how to ensure their ladders and stepladders are compliant ahead of the revised European regulation on portable ladders being enforced this year.

The new regulations seek to reduce ladder accidents, improve worker safety and simplify the ladder selection process. Working at height can be extremely hazardous if the appropriate safety features are not factored in. If workers are involved in such incidents, this can have severe and even fatal implications. Between 2016/17, falls from height were the most common cause of fatalities, accounting for 28% of all fatal injuries and 7% of all non-fatal injuries to employees.¹

Previous British standards for portable ladders and stepladders, BS 2037 and BS 1129, are being revised and replaced with a single British and European standard, BS EN 131. The updated standard contains two categories: EN 131 Professional, for industrial and trade, and EN 131 Non-Professional, for domestic and DIY use.

There are a number of changes that both companies and employees should be aware of including all ladders now having to adhere to the same minimum weight capacity of 150kg, whether it's for domestic or professional use, and the introduction of cycle durability tests to check product durability. Extension ladders that are over 3m in size will also now be required to have a wider base to reduce slips and the risk of ladders flipping or toppling.

Although the new standard does not apply retrospectively and ladders built to the previous standard will still be legally available on the market during the transition period, Arco encourages companies to update their purchasing policies, ensuring EN 131 professional ladders are specified when replacing existing ladders.

In order to ensure its customers comply fully with the latest standards, Arco's product range of warehouse steps, ladders, platforms and podiums is already compliant to BS EN 131. Arco's experts can also provide a free-on-site survey, assessing height risks and identifying the most appropriate equipment needed for the task, whilst its Training and Consultancy service offers three informative training courses, educating staff about how to effectively work with ladders. The courses include:

- Ladder and Step Safety – This is aimed at supervisors and all employees who have to use ladders and steps.
- Working at Height – This is aimed at those required to use Personal Fall Protection Equipment (PFPE) in order to work safely at height.
- Mobile Access Towers - Provides the correct skills, knowledge and understanding to be able to safely oversee the work of operatives on site ensuring that work is properly planned and organised and that those involved in carrying out the work are competent and properly trained, and that towers are correctly inspected and maintained.

To help support its customers, Arco has produced an expert guide and infographic on the new standards, which can be easily downloaded. For a copy of the expert guide, click [here](#). For a copy of the infographic, click [here](#).

For more information, advice on the changes and suitable products please visit, www.arco.co.uk/access or www.arcosafety.ie/access.

ENDS

¹ www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/index.htm

About Arco

Arco is the UK's leading safety company. It distributes quality products and training and provides expert advice, helping to shape the safety world and make work a safer place. Founded in 1884 and with a heritage spanning four generations, Arco integrates traditional family values with pioneering innovation to offer a world-class range of over 170,000 quality assured, branded and own brand products, including personal protective equipment, clothing, footwear, gloves, workplace safety and hygiene products. Headquartered in Hull, Arco reaches its customers through its extensive product catalogue, interactive website and 48 strong trade counter network. The company has sales of over £268m and employs approximately 1700 people. Arco has been accredited a 'One to Watch' status in the Best Companies Times Top 100 Survey.

Arco is dedicated to its Corporate Social Responsibility policy and continually demonstrates its support of local business communities and charitable organisations, donating in excess of 1% of pre tax profits annually. In 2007, Arco became a member of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and in 2010 a member of Sedex, the Supplier Ethical Data Exchange. Going forward, Arco further demonstrates its position as the UK's leading safety company as the exclusive supplier of PPE, footwear and workwear to the BLOODHOUND project's support team involved with the design, build and race of a car to raise the world land speed record 1,000mph. For more information, visit www.arco.co.uk.