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WORKED EXAMPLE: RISK ASSESSMENT AND METHOD STATEMENT

Clearing gutters on a bungalow from a ladder

Hollins & Reed Property Services Ltd · 26 November 2026 (one morning) · In charge: Dan Hollins

Worked example. Change it to fit your job before you use it.

Job details

Company	Hollins & Reed Property Services Ltd
Site and work area	14 Larch Close, Stockport: rear elevation
Planned dates	26 November 2026 (one morning)
Customer	Thornley Vale Estates Ltd
In charge on site	Dan Hollins
Team	Two people, both trained in ladder use: Dan Hollins works from the ladder; Priya Shah foots it and does nothing else while he is on it. They carry it between positions together.
Work	Clearing gutters on a bungalow from a ladder
Prepared by	Dan Hollins
Signature	
Date	

Work and boundaries

Clear leaves and silt from one run of plastic gutter by hand. Areas: Rear gutter and the paving below it; Side path to the street, kept clear

Working arrangement

- Working height: gutter at about 2.4 m, from a 2.4 m single-section ladder; feet no higher than about 1.2 m, hands at the gutter just above the ladder top.
- Ground or floor: level concrete paving, swept clean before the ladder goes up.
- The work area will be kept clear of other people.
- The tenant stays in and uses the front door until we finish. Why a ladder: this is 10 m of gutter holding leaves and wet silt, under 15 minutes at each of eight positions, one hand on the ladder and the other on a scoop. A pole vacuum from the ground would not show the joints and outlets, which the landlord wants looked at, so we go up. The ladder rests on the brick wall under the soffit through a stand-off from the ladder's maker, never on the gutter, which is plastic. The

plastic gutter and thin soffit will not take a tie, the landlord will have no fixings in the brick or the paving, the ladder's maker approves no stability device with this stand-off, and open paving gives nothing to wedge the feet against. So Priya Shah foots the ladder, the last resort, whenever Dan Hollins is on it. Packed silt that a scoop will not lift, or a split gutter, is a different job: he comes down and we go back with a tower. No overhead line is within 10 m. The bungalow was built in 2004.

Emergency arrangements

Fall from the ladder: Priya Shah rings 999 at once, says the casualty is at the back of 14 Larch Close, and stays with him. Nobody moves him unless he is in more danger where he lies. If Priya is the one hurt, Dan Hollins rings. Priya Shah is the first aider, and the kit is in the van on the drive. The tenant meets the crew at the front gate and walks them down the side path, which stays clear and unlocked. Both phones are checked for signal on arrival. Fire: leave by the side path and meet on the pavement outside number 14.

Planned method

1. **Set up the work area**
   Confirm the work area and scope before starting. Keep other people outside the active work area. Keep entrances and escape routes clear.

2. **Check the ladder before use**
   Check the stiles, the feet, the rungs and any locking parts, at the start of the day and whenever the ladder has been moved from dirty ground. Check its detailed inspection record is up to date. Take a damaged ladder out of use.

3. **Fit the stand-off**
   Fit the stand-off to the ladder on the ground, as its maker's instructions say. Its pads go on the brick wall under the soffit, and the ladder stops just under the gutter without touching it.

4. **Set the ladder against the wall**
   Stand it on firm, level, clean ground, with no packing under the feet. Set it at 1 in 4: one unit out for every four up. Rest the top on something strong. Never rest it on a plastic gutter or glazing. Do not work off the top three rungs, and try to make sure the ladder extends at least 1 m (three rungs) above where you are working.

5. **Secure the ladder**
   Keep a second person at the foot for as long as anyone is on the ladder. They do nothing else. Tying comes first, then a stability device, then wedging. Footing is the last resort.

6. **Keep people out from under the ladder**
   Put cones around the foot of the ladder so nobody walks under it or into it. Keep what you need in a tool belt. Nothing is carried up by hand.

7. **Climb facing the ladder**
   Face the rungs while climbing and keep three points of contact. Tool belt on, so both hands are free for the rungs.

8 **Keep each spell on the ladder short**

Come down within 30 minutes at any position. A task that needs longer needs other equipment. Let go of the ladder only for a moment. Bring the ladder down if the wind picks up, or if rain or ice makes it unsafe.

9 **Keep the task within reach**

Use only light tools and materials. Keep one hand on the ladder while you work. Both hands needed for more than a moment: use a tower or platform. Stay off the top three rungs and keep your belt buckle within the stiles. Descend before moving the ladder.

10 **Clear the gutter**

Take the scoop and the bucket cord up in your belt, then pull the empty bucket up and hook it to the ladder. Stand with your feet no higher than the rung about 1.2 m up. Keep one hand on the ladder and scoop with the other, with your belt buckle within the stiles. Fill the 10 litre bucket no more than a third, about 5 kg. Lower it on its cord inside the cones, to the side away from Priya Shah, then climb down with both hands free and empty it. Look over each joint and outlet as you go. At each new position, set the ladder and stand-off again and check the pads before anyone climbs.

11 **Clear and hand back the area**

Remove tools, waste and unused materials. Check the area is clean and ready to use. Tell the customer or whoever runs the site when the work is complete.

Risk assessment

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place
People entering the work area or tripping over materials Step 1	Workers, occupants and visitors	Mark or barrier the active work area. Store tools and materials away from access routes.
A bent stile, worn foot or loose rung makes the ladder fail or slip Step 2	The ladder user	Check the feet are clean, so the feet and not the dirt are on the ground.
The stand-off slips or the ladder rests on the gutter Step 3	The ladder user and the person at the foot	Use the stand-off the ladder’s maker approves. Check both pads are flat on the brick before anyone climbs.
A slipping base, wrong angle or weak resting point causes a fall Step 4	The ladder user and people below	Shut the doors and windows that could push the ladder over. Move the ladder rather than stretching to reach.

Hazard	Who might be harmed and how	Controls in place
A leaning ladder slips or overturns while someone is on it Step 5	The ladder user and people below	Nobody climbs until the ladder is secured.
A person walks into the ladder, or a tool or bucket falls on them Step 6	People in and around the building and the person at the foot	Stop work if anyone comes inside the cones.
A lost handhold or turned body causes a fall Step 7	The ladder user	Do not slide down the stiles.
A long spell on a ladder tires the user, who then loses balance or hold Step 8	The ladder user	Bring the ladder down if the wind picks up, or if rain or ice makes it unsafe.
Overreaching, force or heavy handling pulls the user off balance Step 9	The ladder user	Reposition from the ground instead of leaning sideways. Use a guarded platform for force or bulky work.
Overreaching or a stuck lump of silt pulls the user off the ladder, and dirty gutter water carries infection Step 10	The ladder user and the person at the foot	Clear only what is within reach, then move the ladder. Come down if the silt needs force. Wear gloves, keep cuts covered, and wash your hands before eating.
Debris, tools or unfinished work left in the area Step 11	Workers, occupants and visitors	Remove waste by the agreed route. Record and protect any unfinished work.