

INTERLINK

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Tool Box Talk - Podium Steps Working at Heights

Podium steps represent a safe alternative to builders step ladders to gain access to high level. They are built from a framework of aluminium tubes and 'snap-lock'/hook locking' type fittings and shall only be erected by competent and experienced operators who have attended a Tool Box Talk.

Interlink manufactures a large variety of types of podium steps, including models designated as 420, 500, 670, 750, 960, 1200, Mk1, Mk2 and Mk3 providing varying maximum work platform heights ranging from 0.42M to 1.9M. The Assembly and User Guide instructions and checklists must be available for reference at all times and must be followed exactly.

Podium Step Rules

1. Podium steps must be erected on a firm level base.
2. Check ALL components are free from damage for correct function and use, using the Safety Checklist included in the Assembly and User Guides.
3. Check for overhead hazards where work is to be carried out.
4. The podium steps MUST be erected in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Once erected, check the podium steps to ensure all components, hooks and locking mechanisms fit and operate correctly.
5. Access must be only via the steps and serrated rungs where provided. Climbing up the outside of the podium steps is not permitted.
6. Podiums are provided with swivel castors and sometimes with base plates at the front instead of castors. Each castor is fitted with a brake. The brakes must all be 'on' when the steps are in use. This means that men and materials must not be on the platform when the podium steps are moved.
7. Move the podium steps by pushing horizontally near the base or, if base plates are fitted, by lifting at the front and pushing horizontally whilst the steps rest on the two rear castors. Make sure the route is clear at both ground level and up to the height of the steps before starting to push. Do NOT attempt to pull yourself along on the podium steps. Always relock the castors after moving the steps and then step back onto the platform and lock the gate securely behind you before commencing work.
8. Extra care is essential if outriggers are in use. Outriggers are only to provide extra stability to the podium steps. Only raise outriggers by the minimum amount possible when moving the steps. If in doubt about stability, get assistance to steady the frame whilst moving the steps.

9. Check safe working load for the working platform. Do NOT overload the steps - one man and hand tools – 150kg. Do NOT store materials on the steps.
10. Always work with the guard rail gate fully closed in the locked position. Never work with the gate open, there is a high risk of falling from height.
11. Ladders must not be leant against podium steps or stood on the platform to gain extra height. Never stand on the frame to gain extra height, nor put anything on the platform to gain extra height, stand only on the platform.
12. When working on podium steps, pushing or pulling work actions such as pipe wrenching or cable pulling need to be undertaken with due thought as to where you are to avoid the risk of overturning. Remember that Podium Steps are a substitute for ordinary builder's steps and ladders and are not designed for axial or horizontal loads. If subject to such loads they may well tip over!
13. Work end on if possible and NEVER over-reach when working. Use minimal horizontal force when working on the platform.
14. Do not use another contractors podium steps. It may not have been correctly erected, it may be damaged or incomplete, etc. Use only podium steps provided by your company and erected by a competent person. The Podium Safety Checklist in the Assembly and User Guide should be carried out at least once a week, if the podium steps are in continuous use. Regularly check that the castors, which are held in by an expanding plastic spigot and bolt arrangement are firmly fixed to the bottom of the steps.
15. If in doubt about any application, refer to the supplier or manufacturer for advice.

Any Questions?

Summarise main points and add:

Report any defective equipment to your supervisor and ensure no one else uses the faulty equipment.

The names of people attending the Tool Box Talk should be recorded and kept with other safety records in the event of any need to produce evidence of their attendance.