



Ladder Safety

Why this topic?

Ladders are indispensable for many jobs, and many people think more about the task to be done than the ladder that will get them there. Employees who are aware of ladder safety are less likely to get hurt.

Basic Elements

A few precautions for safe ladder use include:

- ▲ Inspect the ladder for defects before use.
- ▲ Select a ladder with adequate length and load limits.
- ▲ Do not use metal ladders near electrical lines.
- ▲ Don't tie ladders together to make them longer.
- ▲ Set the ladder on a firm, solid surface. Hoist tools and materials up after reaching the working height. Wear tool belts to help manage hand tools.
- ▲ Work within the side rails, if the belt buckle goes outside of the side rails, the employee is reaching too far.

Ladder Inspection

Inspection of the ladder prior to use is very important. Some inspection guidelines include:

- ▲ Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- ▲ Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- ▲ Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- ▲ Always maintain 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).
- ▲ Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- ▲ Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.
- ▲ Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- ▲ Do not use the top step/rung of a



When using an extension ladder you must set the ladder on a solid surface and place the ladder by calculating the distance from the supporting wall as one foot from the wall for each four feet of the ladder's working length.

The ladder should also extend three feet above the top of the landing or roofline (three rungs).

SAFETY TRAINING SIGN-IN SHEET

Company Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject: Ladder Safety

The following employees participated in this training. Sign and print your name.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____

ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.

- ▲ Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- ▲ Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- ▲ Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- ▲ An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support. Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- ▲ The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see photo and caption on page 1).
- ▲ A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- ▲ Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- ▲ Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.

Photo A shows a worker who has used the wrong ladder for the job. The worker is standing on the top and extending his reach too far.

Photo B shows the employee has chosen a better ladder for the job, his reach is better and he is staying on the correct step.

The worker should still adjust his ladder position to have a better aim at his work. Never use a stepladder as a straight ladder.



LADDER SAFETY CHECKLIST

Falls from ladders injure thousands of people each year. Whether you are using your ladder at work or home, follow safe procedures. Examine the list below to test yourself on ladder safety. If you answer NO, you may need to re-examine your adherence to SAFETY!

YES NO

INSPECT YOUR LADDER!

- Rungs, cleats and steps are in good condition.
- Rungs, cleats or steps fit snugly into the side-rail.
- Side-rails are in good condition and do not have cracks, bends or breaks.
- The ladder is free of corrosion.
- Side-rails and steps are free from grease or oil.
- Hardware and fittings are secure and undamaged.
- There is no excessive play or binding on moveable parts.
- Ropes on extension ladders are intact without fraying or excessive wear.

YES NO

USE YOUR LADDER SAFELY

- Did you select a ladder with adequate length and load limits? (Don't use metal ladders near electrical lines.)
- Are you using the ladder for its intended purpose?
 - *Don't use a ladder as a brace, skid, lever, gangway, platform, scaffold, plank or material hoist.*
 - *Don't tie ladders together to make them longer.*
 - *Don't use a stepladder as a straight ladder.*
- Are you securing or barricading the ladder to protect it from being bumped when you have to work in doorways, passages or driveways?
- Are you keeping the area around the top and bottom of the ladder clear?
- Is your stepladder opened fully with the spreaders locked to keep the ladder stable?
- Have you setup your straight ladder using the 4 to 1 rule?
 - *1 foot from the wall for each 4 feet of the ladder's working length.*
- Have you setup your straight ladder so the rails are supported equally at the top?
- Have you set up your straight ladder so the top extends at least 3 feet above the support point?
- Are you using your extension ladder so the upper section overlaps the lower section, and the overlap is on the climbing side with the rungs locked in place?
- Do you face the ladder when ascending or descending?
- Do you use both hands to grip the side rails whenever possible?
 - *Always use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing.*
 - *Do not carry any object or load that could cause you to lose balance.*
- Do you use a ladder safety device when needed on a fixed ladder?
- Do you stay off the top 4 rungs of a straight ladder?
- Do you ever move a portable ladder while someone is on it?
- Do you hoist tools or other materials up to you after you have reached the top of the ladder?
 - *Wear a tool belt to help you manage your tools while working on the ladder.*
- Do you work within the side rails?
 - *If your belt buckle goes past the side rail, you are leaning too far.*
 - *Descend and move the ladder as needed to stay close to your work.*
- Do you store the ladder in a secure designated area after each use?

