

Ladders

Injuries in the workplace because of ladder are commonplace. Falls from ladders can be as painful as a fall from a roof; about a third of all reported falls are from ladders¹. Many fall-related injuries result from the improper use of a ladder, or the use of a defective ladder. Step/extension ladders are made to access/egress upper levels, not to be used as work platforms. Use specifically designed ladders for work platforms such as order pickers; these ladders are constructed with a small platform and guardrail.

¹1993-94 Study: 238 of 705 falls based on an OSHA study.

Inspection

- Look for missing or loose cleats at the bottom.
- Look for loose or missing screws, bolts or nails on job-made ladders
- Look for cracked, broken, split, dented or badly worn rungs, cleats or side rails.
- Look for splinters on wood ladders and corrosion on metal ladders.
- If it is an extension ladder, look for excessive wear on pulleys, ropes and locks.
- Look at the footings and pads to make sure they still provide a non-skid surface.

Ladder Use

- Use the right ladder for the right job.
- Never set your ladder in a walkway or door opening.
- Keep the area at the top and bottom of the ladder clear of tool cords, tools, material and garbage.
- Set the ladder on solid, level and stable footing.
- Use a twenty-five percent (25%) angle on the slope of the ladder.
- The ladder should reach a minimum of three feet above the point of support, and should be secured at this point.
- When using extension ladders, the three (3) top rungs must extend beyond the landing platform, or the top of the ladder must be 36" (3 feet) above the landing.
- Always face the ladder and stay between the side rails.
- Don't carry tools or materials on a ladder. Use both hands when climbing to grab onto the side rails. When moving material or tools, first climb up, then pull up the material or tools with a hand line.
- Only one person should be on a ladder at a time (unless it is double-cleated).
- Secure the top of the ladder to prevent it from sliding.
- Never lean a step ladder. Always fully open a step ladder.
- Remember the 3-Point Rule: At least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, should be in contact with the ladder at all times.
- Always tie off the ladder. That way it stays where you put it.

When you are on a ladder, you can fall. If you can fall, you can get hurt. Use ladders safely.

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