



Preventing slips, trips and falls: Ladder safety

Remember

Taking the time to do the job right will help prevent needless injuries and deaths – short cuts are not worth it when lives are at stake.

Proper ladder setup will help prevent slips and falls whether at work or home. Ladder safety may seem simple, but too many injuries continue to occur every year.

Tips to stay safe

- Choose the right ladder for the job and make sure you have received training on how to use it properly
- Check the area you will be working in for hazards, such as cords or objects in the walkway
- Carry a ladder horizontally while tilting it higher in front and lower in back
- If the ladder is particularly long and heavy, get a coworker to help you carry it
- Inspect the ladder before and after a job - don't use a damaged or unsafe ladder
- Read all warning labels carefully and follow directions before you climb
- Place the base of the ladder on a firm, solid surface
- Make sure the top of the ladder has firm support too – never lean a ladder against a window pane or other unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be placed 1 foot away from the surface it rests against for every 4 feet of ladder height – make sure the ladder extends at least 3 feet over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to the upper support
- Wear clean, dry, slip-resistant shoes and use ladders with slip resistant feet
- Pay attention to the weight limits specific to the ladder you are using
- Don't stand any higher than the third rung from the top of a ladder
- Don't lean or overreach – reposition the ladder closer to the work instead
- Don't use a ladder as a bridge or scaffold
- Don't put a ladder on a box, barrel or other object to gain additional height
- Always keep at least three points of contact with the ladder (i.e., two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand)
- When you climb, always face the ladder and grip the rungs, not the siderails
- Keep your body between the ladder siderails when climbing
- Do not climb with tools in hand – use a tool belt
- Climb down a ladder one rung at a time
- Never jump off of a ladder
- Do not use ladders outdoors in windy or inclement weather
- If you are on a ladder when bad weather begins, descend immediately – don't speed up to finish the job quickly
- Clean the ladder after each use to prevent dirt buildup and store it properly



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