

LADDER SAFETY HANDOUT

Ladders are a simple useful tool used for climbing and the fact that they are simple may be their biggest fault. Workers using ladders tend to get complacent, forgetting proper use precautions. That kind of mistake causes thousands of accidents, disabling injuries and fatalities each year.

OSHA REQUIREMENTS

- Ladders must not be loaded beyond their manufactures capacity. (The capacity is often found on a sticker affixed to the ladder.)
- When a ladder is used for access to an upper landing surface, the ladder side rails must extend at least 3 feet above the surface the ladder is used to access.
- Non-self-supporting ladders must be used at an angle such that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is approximately one-quarter the working length of the ladder.
- Ladders must be kept free of oil, grease, mud, and other slippery hazards.
- Ladders must only be used for their intended purpose. Ladders should not to be used in a horizontal position as a walking surface.
- Ladders must have non-conductive side rails if they are used where the worker on the ladder could contact exposed, energized electrical equipment.
- The top step (rung) should not be used as a step.
- Cross-bracing on the rear section of stepladders must not be used for climbing unless the ladder is provided with steps for climbing purposes.
- When ascending or descending a ladder, the user must face the ladder.
- The worker must use at least one hand to grasp the rung portions when ascending and descending a ladder.
- When a worker is elevated above 6 feet, a fall protection harness must be worn and tied off to a solid structure to protect the worker from falling.
- Ladders must only be used on stable and level surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet.
- The area around the top and bottom of the ladder must be kept clear.



- Ladders must not be tied or fastened together to provide longer sections unless they are specifically designed for such purpose.
- Ladders must not be moved, shifted, or extended while occupied.
- For electrical work, use a ladder designed for this purpose. Do not use a metal ladder.

LADDER SAFETY TIPS

- Inspect the ladder:
 - check for loose or bent rungs
 - check for loose screws, cracks or other damage
- Properly set up the ladder:
 - the ladder should be placed on a firm level surface
 - do not set ladder up on a muddy surface
 - make sure ladder locks or braces are engaged before climbing
 - secure (tie-off) the ladder, if necessary
- Do not use bricks, boxes, etc., to raise the height of the ladder
- Keep all ladders and any tools at least 10 feet from any power lines
- Maintain 3 points of contact when ascending or descending a ladder
- Keep ladders off window panes and sashes
- Never lean a ladder against a movable object
- Never use a step ladder as a straight ladder
- When climbing a ladder:
 - always face the ladder when you climb up or down
 - hold onto the side rails with both hands
 - do not carry tools in hand; use a belt or rope
- Never overreach; always keep your body between the rails
- Never use a ladder in high winds
- Never step on the top rung
- Never leave a raised ladder unattended

