



Ladder Safety

We use ladders on a daily basis because they allow us quick, easy access to elevated work areas. They come in various shapes, sizes, and types. They can be made of aluminum, fiberglass, or wood. On a construction site, you can probably find stepladders, A-frame ladders, extension ladders, podium ladders, fixed ladders, and custom-made ladders. But the two most common types of ladders found on jobsites are stepladders and extension ladders.

No matter what kind of ladder you use, ladder safety begins with inspecting the ladder before you use it. A careful examination may reveal loose or damaged rungs, cracked side rails, damaged feet, broken extension locks, defective ropes or pulleys, or broken or missing spreader bars. If you inspect a ladder and find any defects, remove the ladder from service immediately and tag it “Do Not Use”. Never repair a broken ladder. Before you climb any ladder, think about the following:

- Are you using the right ladder for the work you need to do?
- Do you know the weight limit for the ladder?
- Is the ladder stable? Does it have the proper footing? Are you sure it won't slip, slide, or tip?
- Is the ladder tall enough to reach the work area?
- Are there any overhead power lines nearby? Do you need a non-conductive ladder? Should you be wearing an insulated hardhat and gloves?
- Are the rungs and your boots clean?
- Are you able to keep the areas around the top and bottom of the ladder clear?
- Will you be able to climb the ladder with at least one hand on the ladder at all times?

Remember that portable ladders are designed for short-term use. They are not designed to be permanent work platforms. Never use a ladder in place of scaffolding or another platform that's more suitable for long-term use. Avoid carrying tools and materials in your hands when climbing—hoist tools and materials safely, using a rope and bucket. Always face the ladder when climbing up or down. When working with electricity, use a wood or fiberglass ladder.

If you use a stepladder, be sure the spreader bars are completely extended and locked before you go up the ladder. Make sure all four legs are on solid ground. Never work from either of the top two steps of a stepladder.

Never move a ladder when someone is on it. Ask the person to climb down, and then reposition the ladder. Do not place ladders on boxes, crates, barrels, or other unstable



bases. Don't exceed the ladder's maximum load limit, and be sure to consider your weight and the weight of your tools and equipment when figuring the load on the ladder.

SAFETY REMINDER

At home, never leave ladders unattended. Most children love to climb, but ladders aren't toys. Children can suffer serious or fatal injuries if they play on ladders.