



Ladder Safety Guidelines

Portable ladders can be found on nearly every construction project, and they are helpful for many tasks. However, falls from ladders are one of the leading causes of occupational deaths and injuries. Ladder safety includes training, selection, setup, proper use, and safe work practices.

Remember these guidelines when you use a ladder:

- Always choose the right ladder for the job. Get the right kind and the right size, so you aren't tempted to increase your reach by putting it on boxes or barrels, in a loader bucket, etc.
- Inspect the ladder carefully. Look for broken rungs, split side rails, and damaged feet. Check ropes, pulleys, and guides on extension ladders. Make sure the rungs are clean. If the ladder is damaged, remove it from service immediately, tag it "**Do Not Use,**" and tell your supervisor.
- Set up your ladder on a stable, level surface. Make sure the ladder can't shift from side to side, and that it can't slide out, or be knocked out from under you.
- Before using a stepladder, make sure that the spreader braces are locked into place.
- Never stand or sit on the top two steps of any portable ladder.
- Do not exceed the maximum load rating of ladder.
- Include your weight and the weight of your tools and gear in your calculation.
- When using a ladder to access an upper level or roof, the top of the ladder must extend at least 36 inches above the upper surface.
- Do not try to move or "hop" a ladder while you are on the ladder. Get down and move it.
- Do not overreach or lean while working on a ladder. Get down and move the ladder instead.
- Avoid placing ladders in high-traffic areas.
- Keep the area around the base of the ladder clear of tools and materials.
- Never climb up or down a ladder with tools or materials in your hands. Use a rope and bucket to move them up and down.
- Never use a painted ladder; paint can hide damage and defects.
- Do not use ladders in high winds or storms. Most portable ladders are made of fiberglass, wood, or aluminum. Many contractors prohibit aluminum ladders because aluminum conducts electricity which makes these ladders dangerous around power lines. Some contractors discourage the use of ladders in favor of aerial lifts. Know the rules for ladders before you start climbing.



SAFETY REMINDER

Chairs, buckets, or toolboxes do NOT count as a ladder – use the right tool for the job!