

Ladders are used every day on job sites and in the workplace. They are also one of the least noticed pieces of equipment that may present a major hazard. Most ladder accidents involve unsafe practices and conditions. Help ensure ladder safety with proper planning, inspection, set up, usage, and maintenance.

Proper Planning – Selecting the Proper Ladder for the Job

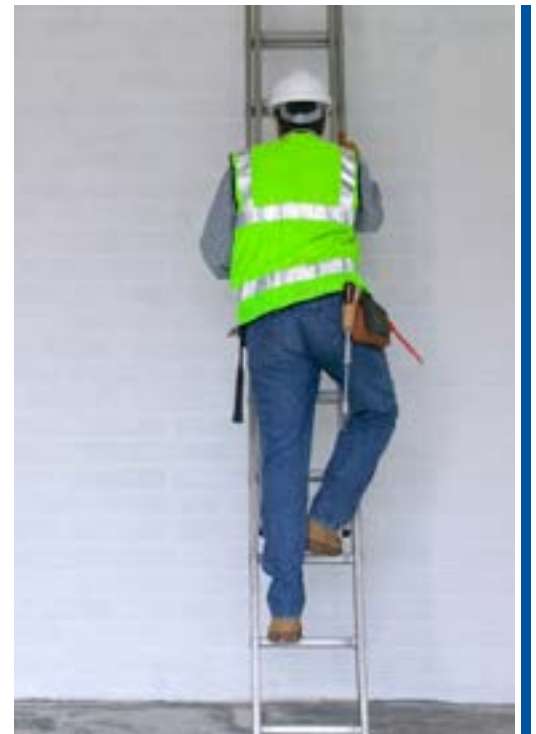
- Make sure the ladder is the correct height and length for your project
- Purchase ladders that have an adequate weight capacity. Many ladders have this printed on them
- Consider the construction of the ladder. For example, metal ladders should not be used around electricity. Instead choose wood or fiberglass ladders.
- Make sure you have a spare ladder on hand in case you have to take one out of service.

Inspection

- Inspect ladders daily.
- Ensure rails and rungs are not cracked, bent, loose, or missing.
- Clean any dirty, oily, or slippery rungs before climbing
- Make there are no bolts, rivets, fasteners, etc. missing.
- When using step ladders, hold the ladder open properly and make sure the spreaders are not damaged.
- If a ladder is in disrepair, it must be tagged and taken out of service.

Setup – Step Ladder

- Make sure the feet of the ladder are level and positioned solidly on the ground.
- Ensure the ladder has two spreaders that can open and remain secure.
- Do not use a step ladder in the closed position as an extension ladder. The legs are not designed for this and could kick out causing injuries.





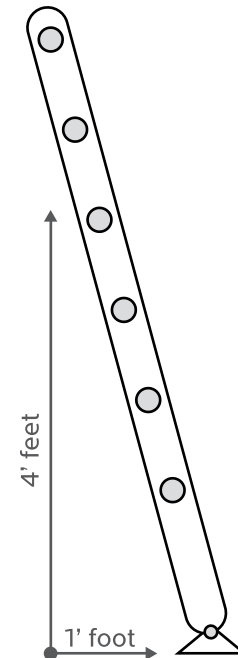
Setup – Extension Ladder

- Make sure feet of the ladder are level and positioned solidly on the ground.
- The ladder should be secure at the top. (If the ladder is used to access other levels, it should extend at least 36" above the access area.)
- If needed, secure the bottom of the ladder to keep it from moving.
- Adjust the ladder to the proper angle using the 4:1 ratio. For every four feet in vertical height, the base of the ladder should extend out one foot.

Usage

- Make sure you are facing the ladder at all times.
- Maintain at least three points of contact while climbing the ladder.
- Never use the top three rungs on an extension ladder.
- Never use the top two steps on a step ladder. If you must go higher use a taller ladder.
- Do not over-reach while on the ladder.
- Do not shift, move, or extend the ladder while you are on it.
- Do not load the ladder beyond the maximum intended weight.
- Keep ladders away from slippery surfaces.
- Keep the areas around the top and bottom of the ladder should be kept clear.
- Do not carry heavy and bulky items up or down the ladder.

1:4 Ratio



Maintenance

- Store ladders so that they will not warp, sag, or become damaged in any other way.
- To maintain proper control over your ladders, do not loan them out to other contractors.
- Make sure ladders are secure during transportation.
- Keep your ladders free from oil, grease, and other chemicals that could cause damage.
- Always tag, remove, and discard any ladders that are in disrepair.

Available Resources:

NIOSH Smart Phone App

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-06-17-13.html>

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