



Toolbox Talks

Ladder Safety Part 1

4 Rules for Ladder Safety

• 1. Pick the right ladder for the job you are going to do:

The ladder should be of the correct type & length. You will probably use an ordinary **straight ladder** for most purposes. An **extension ladder** may be required for high work. A **step ladder** is used when you need a free-standing ladder or one with a tool tray. Some situations may not require a ladder at all. Instead, you may need a scaffold. Never use a metal ladder around any electrical installation.

• 2. Make sure the ladder is in good condition:

Never use a damaged ladder. Make sure all parts of the ladder are in good working order, free from corrosion, rust, rot, cracks, & other defects. Check the rungs, side rails, braces, hinges, ropes, & pulleys. See that the rungs are free of slippery substances such as oil. Never use a painted ladder because the paint can hide defects. To protect it, use a clear preservative instead of paint. Make sure that the non-slip rubber feet are in good condition. Check overall for any signs of warping or twisting.

• 3. Set up the ladder correctly:

With a **straight ladder**, walk it into position hand over hand. Make sure the base is solid. Tie the top if you can. A straight ladder should be placed against the wall at an angle so that the base of the ladder is one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height. You can remember this formula as the "four up, one out" rule. So a 16 foot extension ladder should be 4 feet out from the wall at the base.

A **stepladder** should be locked into a fully-open position before you attempt to use it. Raising an **extension ladder** is a two-person job. There should be a considerable overlap between each section. **If the ground is uneven**, utilize boards or other methods to ensure the ladder has even ground to stand on. For soft turf or other "mushy" surfaces, you can turn the feet up on the ladder to make spikes so it will be stable on the ground. When using a ladder **to gain access to a roof**, place the ladder so that it extends at least three feet above the edge. Usually you can just count the rungs to estimate 3 feet.

All information found on www.safetytoolboxtalks.com

• 4. Work safely on the ladder: (See back for official OSHA Ladder Safety Rules)

*When climbing or working on a ladder, maintain three-point contact. This means that two hands & one foot, or one hand & two feet should be in contact with the ladder at all times. (See diagram on back side)

*Keep centered on the ladder. Here's a way to remember to do so - your belt buckle should remain between the two side rails at all times. Never lean away from the ladder because you can cause it to topple.

*Do not carry tools or materials in your hands. Keep tools in a belt, or hoist objects up after you.

*Do not stand on the top few rungs of any ladder.

*Footwear should have clean soles made of a non-skid material. Leather is too slippery.

*Never move a ladder while you are on it.

*Move slowly & carefully on a ladder.

*Do not work on a ladder if you are ill, overly tired, or possibly under the influence of alcohol or any drug.

*Stay off outdoor ladders during bad weather such as rain, wind, or lightning.

*Certain work situations may require the use of fall prevention equipment such as safety belts or harnesses. Be sure to use this equipment as directed and keep it in good condition.

Gravity Always Wins

Gravity never forgets. As soon as you set foot on the ladder's first rung & pull your body off the ground, gravity works to bring you back to earth. Therefore, it's no surprise that ladder safety begins from the ground up.

Always **properly set up your ladder**; **climb carefully** facing the ladder at all times; **think before you carry a ladder**, check your surroundings out & proceed carefully as ladders can be heavy and unmanageable. You could strike another person or object, or hit electrical wires. Make the ladder as compact as possible before transporting it. Carry it horizontally while tilting it higher in front & lower in back. If the ladder is particularly long & heavy, get a coworker to help you carry it; & always **follow ladder safety rules!**



Toolbox Talks

Ladder Safety Part 2

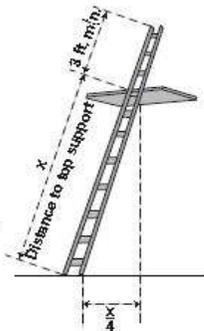
OSHA Portable Ladder Safety

Falls from portable ladders (step, straight, combination, & extension) are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities & injuries.

- Read & follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service & tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder in a partially closed position.
- Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.
- Always maintain a 3-point (two hands & a foot, or two feet & a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step & always face the ladder while climbing. (See Diagram)
- Only use ladders & appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks, or hooks) for their designed purposes.
- Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps,



3-Point Contact



- Use a ladder only on a stable & level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
 - Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
 - Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
 - An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (See Diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single, or extension ladder.
 - The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see diagram).
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
 - Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
 - Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating & of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.

OSHA Rules for All Ladders

- Maintain ladders free of oil, grease, & other slipping hazards.
- Do not load ladders beyond their maximum intended load nor beyond their manufacturer's rated capacity.
- Use ladders only for their designed purpose.
- Use ladders only on stable & level surfaces unless secured to prevent accidental movement.
- Do not use ladders on slippery surfaces unless secured or provided with slip-resistant feet to prevent accidental movement. Do not use slip-resistant feet as a substitute for exercising care when placing, lashing, or holding a ladder upon slippery surfaces.
- Secure ladders placed in areas such as passageways, doorways or driveways, or where they can be displaced by workplace activities or traffic to prevent accidental movement. Or use a barricade to keep traffic or activity away from the ladder.
- Keep areas clear around the top & bottom of ladders.
- Do not move, shift, or extend ladders while in use.
- Use ladders equipped with nonconductive side rails if the worker or the ladder could contact exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Face the ladder when moving up or down.
- Use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when climbing.
- Do not carry objects or loads that could cause loss of balance & falling.

OSHA Rules for Defective Ladders

Ladders needing repairs are subject to the following rules:

- Portable ladders with structural defects—such as broken or missing rungs, cleats or steps, broken or split rails, corroded components or other faulty or defective components—must immediately be marked defective or tagged with "Do Not Use" or similar language and withdrawn from service until repaired.
- Fixed ladders with structural defects—such as broken or missing rungs, cleats or steps, broken or split rails, or corroded components—must be withdrawn from service until repaired.
- Defective fixed ladders are considered withdrawn from use when they are immediately tagged with "Do Not Use" or similar language, or marked in a manner that identifies them as defective, or blocked—such as with a plywood attachment that spans several rungs.
- Ladder repairs must restore the ladder to a condition meeting its original design criteria before the ladder is returned to use.

All information found on OSHA.gov