

UC Monthly Safety Spotlight, February 2012

Shop, Tool and Electrical Safety

Ladder Safety Tips

- In 2005 (the last year with available data), falls from portable ladders caused twelve fatalities in California workplaces. To help prevent injuries and deaths, Federal OSHA offers these safety tips for portable ladders:
- Read and follow all labels and markings on the ladder. Do not exceed the maximum load rating listed.
- Be carefully with electrical hazards. Look for power lines overhead before handling the ladder. Do not use a metal ladder near power lines or exposed electrical equipment.
- Always inspect the ladder before use. Damaged ladders are to be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- Always maintain three-point contact (two hands and a foot or two feet and a hand) with the ladder. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder when climbing.
- Before ascending, make sure the ladder is free of slippery material on the rungs, steps and feet.
- Do not use the top step or rung of a stepladder or the top three rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- Only use a ladder on a stable and level surface unless it has been secured to prevent displacement
- Do not move or shift a ladder while anything is on the ladder.
- An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface should extend at least three feet above the point of support.
- The appropriate angle to set up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the ladder's length from the wall or other vertical surface.
- Be sure to properly engage all locks on extension ladders.

