

PRACTICE BASIC LADDER SAFETY

Learn about the importance of training and safety precautions for using ladders and other lift equipment.

Inspect ladders before each use:

- Use a Ladder Inspection form to survey your equipment (sample: http://www-ehs.ucsd.edu/shop/pdf/Ladder_Inspection_Form.pdf)
- Check the weight rating on your ladder. Do not subject the ladder to a load greater than its capacity
- Make sure there are nonslip safety feet on each ladder foot, and secure the ladder evenly against a solid support
- Check for cracks, rust, broken rungs and rails, and oily or greasy rungs
- Tag damaged ladders as “defective” and remove them from the workplace

Make sure the ladder is stable:

- Secure the ladder evenly against a solid support
- Secure the base of a long ladder to the ground if possible, and tie the top to the upper landing surface. If you are going to use the ladder for access to an upper landing surface, secure it against sideways movement at the top or have another worker hold it in place during use.
- When you are climbing onto a roof, your ladder should extend at least 3 feet higher than the roof.
- Remember the 4-to-1 rule: For every 4 feet of rise, the base of the ladder should be 1 foot away from the object that the top of the ladder is resting against. For example, if the ladder touches the wall 16 feet above the ground, the base of the ladder should be 4 feet from the wall.

Practice safe climbing, standing and reaching from a ladder:

- Climb and descend the ladder carefully, facing it and using both hands.
- Maintain 3-point contact when climbing up and down a ladder or working from it. 3-point contact means 1 hand and 2 feet or 2 hands and 1 foot on the ladder at all times. The potential for a fall is significantly reduced if 3-point contact is maintained at all times.
- Do not stand on the topcap or the step below the topcap of a stepladder.
- Never push or pull anything sideways while on a ladder. This puts a side load on the ladder that can cause it to tip out from under you.
- Lean into the ladder while working, and keep your hips centered between the side rails.
- Overreaching is probably the most common cause of falls from ladders. Follow these precautions:
 - Select a ladder tall enough for the job. This will prevent you from reaching too far forward or upward, which could cause you to lose your balance.
 - Do not overreach from a ladder, or lean too far to one side. Work as far as you can reach comfortably and safely, then climb down and move the ladder to a new position.

Use care with tools and heavy loads:

- Use a tool belt or hand line to carry materials
- Never carry heavy or bulky loads up a ladder. Climb up yourself first, and then pull the material up with a rope.
- Do not leave tools or materials on top of ladders. If they fall, you or someone else could be hurt.

