



Fall Protection – Fixed Ladder



A fixed ladder is permanently attached to a structure, building, or equipment. Fixed ladders are used throughout Performing Arts facilities to access elevated areas, such as fly lofts, the tension grid, and bridges/catwalks.

When fixed ladders are constructed for use in outdoor performances, they must be constructed as specified in California Code of Regulations, Title 8, General Industry Safety Orders, Sections 3277 and 3278.

General Guidelines

1. Participate in ladder and fall protection training prior to ascending fixed ladders.
2. Never use unprotected fixed ladders over 20 feet in length.
3. Remove all loose items from your pockets.
4. Maintain three points of contact with the ladder when climbing; two hands and one foot or one hand and both feet.

In certain cases, a ladder safety system must be used when using a fixed ladder. A ladder safety system is required for ladders that:

1. Exceed 20 feet in length and are not equipped with a cage and do not have rest balconies every 20 feet or fraction thereof.
2. Exceed 30 feet and are equipped with a ladder cage but do not have rest balconies every 30 feet or fraction thereof.
3. Have no off-set (rest balconies) ladder sections.

Cal-OSHA defines a ladder safety system as an approved assembly of components whose function is to arrest the fall of a user. The ladder safety system includes:

1. A carrier that is a flexible cable or rigid track to which the lanyard will be attached.
2. Permanent attachment of the carrier.
3. Associated attachment elements such as safety sleeve, full-body harness, and connectors.

Ladder Safety System Fall Arrest Guidelines

1. Only use full-body harnesses that are equipped with front or hip D-ring attachments.
2. Inspect all fall protection equipment prior to each use. Immediately report any damaged equipment to your supervisor or instructor.

3. Never use defective fall protection equipment.
4. Attach or tie-off any tools or equipment, including your hard hat, to your body when you need to transport items up or down the ladder.
5. Attach the front or hip D-ring to the carrier connection prior to ascending or descending the ladder.
6. Ensure the connections are compatible and secure, and the snap hook is closed and locked.
7. Disconnect from the ladder safety device to exit the ladder only after you are stable.
8. Never detach from the ladder safety system during an ascent or descent of the ladder until you are prepared to exit the ladder.
9. Allow the carrier connection to lead you down. Climbing down out of position will cause the carrier connection mechanism to lock onto the carrier.
10. Move upward slightly to release the carrier connection should it lock.
11. Never use the ladder climbing body harness for attachment to fly, tension, and other types of fall protection systems that require body harness D-ring attachment at the back of the harness. Change body harnesses prior to attaching to another type of fall protection system.

Talk to your supervisor if you have any questions about this information.