

Ladder Safety – *Proper Usage Is Key*

“It’s not the fall that hurts – it’s the sudden stop...” – Everyday thousands of people risk falling from a ladder because they ignore basic ladder safety rules. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that more than 100,000 people were treated last year because of ladder accidents, ladder defects and unsafe usage.

Step Ladders - make sure the spreader bar is sturdy and locked in place before climbing. Place all ladders on level, solid footing.

Straight Ladders & Extension Ladders - should have safety shoes, metal spikes or spurs. Keep pedestrian traffic away from a ladder work area, so that they do not become injured from falling objects or so that they cannot accidentally bump the ladder. Secure the top of straight & extension ladders so that they can’t slide or tip. In order to be properly placed, straight & extension ladders should be extended at least three (3) feet above the top-most working level.

Also -

- Never overreach when using a ladder. If your shoulders are outside of the width of a ladder, you are overreaching and could cause the ladder to tip. ***Climb down and move the ladder!***
- The proper angle of a ladder is important and is often overlooked. Remember the four to one rule. Move the ladder one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height.
- When climbing up or down a ladder, always face the ladder and use both hands. Tool pouches or other carrying devices should be used if necessary.
- Never climb beyond the third rung of a straight ladder or the second step from the top of a step ladder.
- Fiberglass ladders are best. However, if you only have access to a metal ladder, avoid using it near electricity. If the weather conditions are poor (rainy or windy) postpone climbing.
- Your safety is more important than the job you’re doing!
- Inspect a ladder before each use. If it is not safe, do not use it! It should be tagged and taken out of service. Rarely should a ladder be repaired, however very minor defects can be fixed (i.e., loose bolts).
- Never paint a ladder because the paint can conceal defects such as cracks.