

Ladder Safety

As the holidays approach, ladders become an essential tool in decorating our homes, classrooms and work areas. Falls are one of the leading causes of injuries and-or death in the workplace. Most falls are attributed to improper usage as opposed to malfunctioning equipment. Injuries from falls can be easily be avoided with proper inspections, set-up, use, and storage practices.

Inspection

- Inspect ladders prior to use. Look for cracks, bends, damaged footings, or spreaders.
- Ladders should be stable, not wobbly.
- Warning signs and labels should be legible and not painted over.
- If the ladder is deemed unfit for use, the ladder should be discarded and replaced.

Set-Up

- Ladders must be set-up on flat even surfaces.
- If setting up in high traffic areas, consider blocking off the work area.
- Extension ladders must follow a 4:1 ratio - for every 4' up, the ladder base must go 1' out.
- Avoid setting up ladders near electrical lines; especially metal ladders!!!
- A-frame ladders must have the spreaders locked in place.

Usage

- ALWAYS maintain 3-points of contact with the ladder - 2 hands + 1 foot or 2 feet + 1 hand.
- ALWAYS follow the Belt Buckle rule: keep belt buckle within the sides of the ladder.
- NEVER use a metal ladder for electrical work (i.e. installing or changing lights). Select a wood or fiberglass ladder instead.
- NEVER extend or reach beyond the sides of the ladder.
- NEVER use the top step of the ladder.
- NEVER exceed the maximum load rating of the ladder.



Storage

- Store ladders out of direct sunlight and moisture to prevent warping.
- Store ladders in secure locations where only authorized individuals have access.