Ladder Safety 2 Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Ladders are not always the safest option. Sometimes scaffolding may work better. Once it’s determined that the ladder is the best option for the job it’s important to use the right one. The right ladder for the job may not be the first one available or easiest to carry.

What’s the Danger

SOME COMMON CAUSES OF LADDER INJURIES

- mounting or dismounting the ladder improperly.
- losing one’s balance.
- failing to set up the ladder properly.
- over-reaching while on the ladder; and
- Mis-stepping while climbing or descending.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report eight-in-10 construction injuries treated in emergency rooms nationwide involve ladders. Most ladder injuries are the result of falls. Either a worker loses balance and falls off a ladder, or it’s unstable and tips over with a worker on it.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

COMMON CAUSES OF LADDER FALLS

Unsafe actions when using ladders– People often do not follow the safe work practices when using ladders. Standing on the top step of a ladder is a common and deadly practice. Other actions like climbing up a ladder carrying objects, leaning to reach for something, and attempting to move the ladder while still on it are some common practices that lead to injuries.

No inspection prior to use– Cracked or broken rungs, loose bolts,

non-approved fixes, etc. lead to injuries.

Not using the correct ladder– People will often use the same ladder for many different jobs and situations. Choosing a ladder that is too short for the job is often a problem that leads to an injury. Also choosing a ladder not stable enough for the ground conditions or one that is not rated properly for the job are issues that can lead to injury.

POTENTIAL HARMFUL LADDER USE

- Avoid using the ladder if you feel dizzy or tired or are impaired.
- If using a ladder outside, do not use in windy or inclement weather.
- Make certain the ladder is free of grease, oil, mud and other sticky or slippery materials.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes with clean soles for maximum traction.
- Face the ladder and always grip the rungs, not the side rails.
- Always keep three points of contact with the ladder: Two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand.
- Extension ladders should extend 3 feet above the roof or platform you're trying to reach.
- Do not stand higher than the step indicated on the label marking the highest standing level.
- Don't lean or overreach; reposition the ladder instead.
- Do not move the ladder while in use.
- Take your time when climbing down so you don't skip any steps.
- Don't climb while carrying tools; use a tool belt.
- Never have someone climb up to bring you something; only one person should be on a ladder at a time.

SAFETY LADDER CHECKLIST FOR WORKERS

- Neglected ladders can become unsafe ladders, so workers should maintain them frequently. Before using a ladder, it should be inspected to make sure it is in good working

condition. If an inspection shows defects in a ladder, it should be immediately tagged out of service. Broken or damaged ladders should be properly repaired by a qualified worker, or they should be discarded and replaced.

- A ladder inspection begins from the top down. Workers should look for loose steps and rungs. The rungs should be sturdy, clean, and not slippery from grease or oil. The upright ladder legs should be strong and free of cracks, splits, and bent edges. The ladder's braces should be solid. Nails, screws, bolts, or other fasteners should be tight. The ladder feet should be examined, and the non-slip base should be in good repair.
- Different ladder types and materials have specific inspection points. Wood ladders should never be painted and should not have cracks or splits. Metal and fiberglass ladders should be checked for bends and breaks. Metal ladders should be inspected for signs of corrosion. Step ladders should not be wobbly—a possible indication of side strain—and the hinges should be firm and straight. Extension ladders should have worked extension locks that seat properly. The extension rope should not be rotted or frayed.
- Workers should try to prevent ladder damage during transport and use, because this can weaken the ladder. When hauling a ladder, workers should tie it securely to the vehicle to prevent nicks, gouges, or chafing. Damaged bolts and joints can work loose and eventually cause the ladder to twist and become unstable. Straight ladders should be stored flat or on wall brackets to prevent sagging or warping. Step ladders should be stored upright and in the closed position. All ladders should be stored in covered, protected areas away from moisture sources.
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FINAL WORD

Ladders are used at home and the workplace. People who use them at home often do not use ladders in the workplace; rules at home are often more relaxed than in the workplace. Using a ladder unproperly causes many accidents resulting in injuries and even death.