Ladder Safety for Hospitality Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Ladder safety is crucial in any workplace, including the hospitality industry where ladders might be used for tasks such as reaching high shelves, changing light bulbs, or accessing storage areas. Employers are required to train employees to recognize ladder hazards and follow procedures to minimize these risks.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

Improper ladder use can lead to injuries such as fractures, with foot fractures being associated with the longest duration of disability.

Some common injuries that can result from ladder use in hospitality include:

- Head Injuries
- Back and Spinal Injuries
- Lacerations and Abrasions
- Crush Injuries
- Internal Injuries

Workers may encounter specific dangers and hazards related to the use of ladders, including:

- **Storage Area Risks:** Hospitality workers often use ladders to access storage areas, which may be cramped, poorly lit, or crowded. This increases the risk of slips, trips, and falls.
- **Working at Heights:** Hospitality workers may need to use ladders to perform tasks such as changing light bulbs, cleaning high surfaces, or accessing equipment on shelves. Working at heights increases the risk of falls, particularly if the ladder is not properly secured or if the worker loses

their balance.
- **Electrocution:** Metal ladders conduct electricity and contact with live wires can cause severe or fatal shocks. Hospitality work often involves reaching in high places for electrical tasks.
- **Poor Maintenance:** Ladders that are not properly maintained, such as those with loose rungs, damaged rails, or missing safety features, pose a significant risk to workers.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Staying safe on the job is paramount in hospitality. Ladder use carries risks like falls, electrical shock, and muscle strain. To minimize these dangers, staff should always inspect ladders before use, choose the right type for the job, and maintain three points of contact while climbing. Here are some key points to remember:

Before you use a ladder:

- **Choose the right ladder:** Select a ladder with the appropriate weight capacity for the job and the user's weight plus tools. Opt for a stepladder for short jobs and an extension ladder for high ceilings or roofs. Consider fiberglass for electrical work due to its non-conductive properties.
- **Inspect the ladder:** Check for cracks, loose bolts, damaged rungs, or any other defects. Don't use a faulty ladder!

While using the ladder:

- **Maintain three points of contact:** Always keep one hand and two feet, or two hands and one foot, in contact with the ladder for stability.
- **Face the ladder:** Ascend and descend the ladder while facing it. Don't climb backwards.
- **Secure the base**: Ensure the ladder is placed on a stable surface. If necessary, use a spotter to hold the base for additional safety.
- **Don't overreach:** Lean in towards the ladder to avoid overextending and losing balance. Reposition the ladder if

needed.
- **The top three rungs are off-limits:** These rungs are typically less sturdy and not designed for full-weight support.

Additional tips:

- Never use a ladder as a bridge or a seat.
- Don’t carry tools in your hands while climbing. Use a tool belt or have someone hand them to you when you’re on the ladder.
- Never leave a ladder unattended in a public area. This can be a safety hazard for guests.

Choosing the correct ladder in hospitality involves considering a few key factors:

- Select a ladder that allows you to comfortably reach your target work area without overextending. Remember, the safest standing position is a few steps below the top.
- Make sure the ladder can support the combined weight of the worker, tools, and any materials. Look for the weight rating label on the ladder.
- For electrical tasks, a non-conductive fiberglass ladder is crucial to avoid electrical hazards. Step ladders are ideal for short jobs, while extension ladders are better for high ceilings or roofs.
- Always use a ladder on a level, stable surface. If necessary, use a spotter to hold the base for additional security.

FINAL WORD

By prioritizing proper ladder selection, use, and training, hospitality businesses can create a safer work environment for their staff. This not only protects employees from falls, shocks, and strains, but also safeguards the business from potential lawsuits and injuries.