

Ladder safety

Introduction:

Working on ladders can be hazardous. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data, falls from ladders account for nearly 24,000 injuries and over 100 deaths each year in private industry.

Hazards to watch for:

- Using a ladder that is not tall enough for the task to be performed safely.
- Reaching out or leaning beyond the siderails of the ladder.
- Broken or slippery rungs.
- Ladders that are not set up straight on firm, even ground.

Safe procedures:

- Inspect all ladders before using them. Look for loose, broken, or missing parts, slippery rungs, skid-resistant features, and movable parts.
- Don't use damaged ladders. Instead, tag them and have the ladders repaired or destroyed.
- Do not use metal ladders near electrical lines.
- Don't tie ladders together.
- Set the ladder on a firm, solid surface.
- Place a straight or extension ladder at an angle so that the ladder's base is one foot out for every four feet of ladder working length (support point to base).

- Face the ladder and use both hands to grip the ladder when climbing or descending.
- Always maintain at least 3 points of contact with the ladder.
- Don't carry tools up a ladder—hoist tools up to you or wear a tool belt.
- Do not stand on the top two steps of a step-ladder or the top four rungs of a straight ladder.
- Do not lean to reach or reach beyond the siderails of the ladder. Get down and reposition the ladder.
- Avoid makeshift portable ladder repairs.
- Do not try to straighten or use a bent ladder. Always have a qualified person perform repairs.

In conclusion:

1. Select the correct ladder for the task.
2. Inspect the ladder before use.
3. Don't take risks on a ladder.
4. Use the ladder for its intended purpose