

# Ladder Safety

More than 300 people die each year from injuries related to ladders, in addition to minor injuries sustained from misuse. This makes a total of 511,000 incidents per year. Sadly, a large number of these injuries could be prevented with the use of safety guidelines regarding ladder usage.

## 1. Use the correct ladder for the job.

You should always use a ladder of the proper length to reach the working height you need. Make sure that you use a ladder according to your job and working load (combined weight of climber and load being carried).

### **Duty Rating**

Industrial Extra Heavy  
Industrial Heavy  
Commercial Medium  
Household Light

### **Workload**

300 lbs. Maximum  
250 lbs. Maximum  
225 lbs. Maximum  
200 lbs. Maximum

## 2. Inspect the ladder.

Never use a ladder that is damaged, broken, or bent. Make sure that all parts are in good working order, and that all rivets, joints, nuts and bolts are tight. Also, make sure that the ladder is free of grease, oil, mud, water and other slippery materials before using.

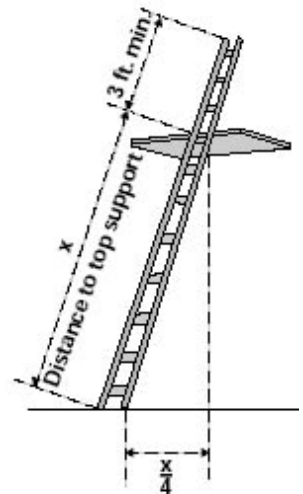
## 3. Moving the ladder.

Always carry a stepladder in the closed position. If you are carrying a single or extension ladder, carry it parallel to the ground. Be sure to hold the side rail in the middle of the ladder so you can balance the load. If you are carrying a very long ladder, you should get help.

## 4. Setting Up the Ladder

Before using a ladder outside the home, make sure that it will not come in contact with wires, tree limbs, or any other obstructions. Make sure that the ladder is on firm, even ground. For every 4 feet that the ladder rises, the bottom of the ladder should be 1 foot away from the wall. If you are going to climb onto a roof, the ladder should extend 3 feet higher than the roof. Also, the upper and lower sections of an extension ladder should overlap to provide stability.

- Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- Use a ladder only on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.



### 5. Recommended height of a ladder.

Make sure that your stepladder is fully opened and the spreaders and braces between the two sections are fully extended and locked before use. Do not place stepladders or utility ladders on boxes, countertops, or unstable surfaces to gain additional height. The highest standing level on any ladder should be two steps down from the top. The recommended work heights are as follows.

<u>Ladder Height</u>	<u>Maximum Work Height</u>
16 ft. ladder	13 ft. maximum work height
24 ft. ladder	21 ft. maximum work height
28 ft. ladder	24 ft. maximum work height
32 ft. ladder	29 ft. maximum work height
36 ft. ladder	32 ft. maximum work height

### 6. Using the ladder.

Before you climb on a ladder, make sure the locks are secured and the top and bottom of the ladder rails are on firm surfaces. Make sure that the soles of your shoes are clean so that they do not slip off the ladder rungs and do not wear slippery-soled shoes. Check to be sure that your shoelaces are securely tied and make sure that clothing is not too big, as to cause a slip or trip.

- Face the ladder while climbing and stay in the center of the rails.
- Grip both rails securely while climbing. Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing.
- On single or extension ladders, never stand above the third rung from the top and never climb above the point where the ladder touches the wall or vertical support.
- Never stand on the top rung of any ladder.
- Do not lean over the side of the ladder. Your belt buckle should not be further than the side rail.
- On stepladders, never stand on the paint shelf, spreaders, or back section.
- Do not overreach; it is safer to move the ladder to a new location when needed.
- Do not try to “jog” or “walk” the ladder to a new location while standing on it. Climb down and reposition the ladder.
- Do not use any ladder if you tire easily, are subject to fainting spells or are using medications that make you dizzy or drowsy.
- Do not overload the ladder; it is meant to be used by only one person at a time.
- Never use a ladder in high winds.

