

Jobsite Ladder Safety

Ladders are one of the most common tools on the jobsite, but they also cause many injuries. Before climbing up, be sure to consider these safety tips provided by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).¹

Ladder Safety Tips

Safety tips for step, straight, combination, and extension ladders per OSHA guidelines:

- Set the ladder on solid ground against a solid support. Don't set the ladder on boxes or other materials, or splice two ladders together.
- Place the base of straight ladders away from the wall about one foot for every four feet of vertical height.
- Don't set up ladders in areas such as doorways or walkways where others may run into them.
- Be sure straight ladders are long enough so the side rails extend above the top support point by at least three feet.
- Keep the area around the top and base of the ladder clear.
- Secure the top of straight ladders to prevent them from shifting.
- Ladders should be used in a vertical position only. Don't use ladders as a platform, runway or scaffold.
- Use non-conductive ladders when near electrical lines.
- Keep ladders clean and clear. Don't apply stickers or decals to ladders and don't run hoses, extension cords or ropes on a ladder.
- Most ladders are designed to hold only one person at a time.
- To avoid slipping on a ladder, check your shoes for oil, grease or mud, and wipe it off before climbing.
- Always face the ladder, and hold on with both hands when climbing up or down. Don't try to carry tools or materials with you.
- If something is out of reach, get down and move the ladder over, instead of leaning out to the side.

Just as you regularly inspect other pieces of equipment, ladders should be checked just as often. If you find a ladder in poor condition, remove it from the jobsite immediately.

Frequently check ladders for:

- Loose or missing rungs or cleats
- Loose nails, bolts or screws
- Wood splinters or damaged edges
- Corrosion of metal ladders or metal parts

Q&A:

Here are some questions to help start conversations around ladder safety in your workplace:

- How are ladders used on this jobsite, and how will you use them safely?
- How often should a ladder be inspected?
- What should you do if you find defects on a ladder?
- How high must the side rails of a straight ladder extend above the landing/support point?
- What is the correct way to set up a ladder?

For more information, please refer to the **OSHA Fact Sheet on Reducing Falls in Construction: Safe Use of Stepladders**.

