

# Construction Ladder Safety

Toolbox Talk 

We get so comfortable around ladders that it's easy to forget what could happen if they are used incorrectly. In this meeting, we'll review ladder safety basics so you can avoid easily preventable injuries.

## Get Back to the Basics

A portable ladder can be self-supporting or made to lean against a structure; it can be moved easily. Step stools, step ladders, platform ladders, telescoping ladders, and extension ladders are all portable ladders.

A fixed ladder is an integral part of a structure. A job-made ladder is fixed and is made out of wood at the construction site.

**Ladder safety can be summed up this way: regular inspections, correct setup, and safe climbing.**



## Discussion

- Do you know someone who experienced a major accident or near miss due to unsafe ladder use?
- When are you tempted to take shortcuts? What should you do instead?

## 1. Inspect Your Ladder Before Use

Inspect your ladder before you use it. Note its intended use and weight capacity.

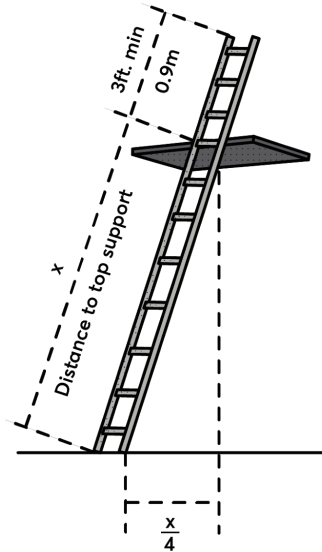
**Mark damaged ladders for replacement, or destroy them immediately.**

DO NOT USE THE LADDER IF YOU FIND:

- Structural damage such as split or bent side rails
- Missing safety devices or broken rungs or steps
- Grease, dirt or other substances that could cause slips or falls
- Paint, tape or stickers, except warning labels, that could hide defects
- For job-made ladders, incorrect or unstable construction.

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## 2. Use Ladders Safely

- Select the correct ladder for the task.
- Place all feet of the ladder on a stable and level surface.
- Extension ladders used to access upper levels must extend at least three feet above the roof edge.
- Ensure the ladder's length will allow you to safely reach the work area.
- Never load ladders beyond the maximum intended load or rated capacity.
- Be sure the load rating can support the weight of the user *and* the job materials.
- Don't use metal ladders for electrical work or near overhead power lines.
- Keep the area around the top and bottom of the ladder clear.
- Never use the top step of a ladder.
- Never carry your equipment or loads as you climb the ladder. Hoist the tools you need up and down.
- Do not tie or fasten ladders together to create longer sections. Don't place ladders on crates, barrels, truck beds, lifts, etc.
- **Use ladders safely every time. Even when you want to just get 'er done, risking yourself and others isn't worth it.**

## 3. Climb Safely

1. When climbing, face the ladder and use the hand-over-hand method, placing your hands on the rungs. Always maintain three points of contact.
2. When using a stepladder, do not climb using the cross-bracing on the back of the ladder.
3. Ensure a metal spreader or locking device is on each stepladder to hold the front and back sections open when the ladder is being used.
4. Make sure the ladder's components will not cause punctures, lacerations, or snag clothing.
5. Never move a ladder while it's occupied.

## Activities

- Display each type of ladder used on the jobsite and discuss proper use.
- Break into small groups to **inspect** a ladder and **practice** safe ladder setup and climbing skills.

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Toolbox Talk 

Given By:

On (MM/DD/YY):

At (Name of Jobsite):

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