LADDER SAFETY RULES

Ladders can make many tasks easier, but they are also a continual safety hazard. Even the best ladder is not safe unless you are trained and proficient in using ladders. Each year, many people suffer serious injuries from accidents involving ladders. Before you use a ladder, take a moment to think about doing it safely.

A secure, well-made ladder is necessary for safe ladder use. Ladders come in different styles, including step, straight, and extension. They also vary in construction and may consist of wood, aluminum, or fiberglass.

Choose the correct type and size ladder for the job. All ladders sold within the U.S. are rated as follows:
- Type IAA Extra-heavy-duty industrial ladder rated to hold up to 375 pounds.
- Type IA Extra-heavy-duty industrial ladder rated to hold up to 300 pounds.
- Type I Heavy-duty industrial ladder rated to hold up to 250 pounds.
- Type II Medium-duty commercial ladder rated to hold up to 225 pounds.
- Type III Light-duty household ladder rated to hold up to 200 pounds.

GENERAL
- Select the correct ladder for the task.
- Use proper lifting and carrying techniques while transporting ladders.
- Watch for overhead obstructions and power lines (keep a minimum of 10’ from power lines).
- Inspect for physical defects before use. Make sure labels are present and legible.
- Ladders are not to be painted except for numbering purposes.
- Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- Do not use ladders for skids, braces, workbenches, or any purpose other than climbing.
- When you are ascending or descending a ladder, do not carry objects that will prevent you from grasping the ladder with both hands.
- Always face the ladder when ascending and descending.
- If you must place a ladder in front of a doorway, barricade the door to prevent its use and post a warning sign.
- Only one person is allowed on a ladder at a time.
- Do not jump from a ladder when descending.
- All joints between steps, rungs, and side rails must be tight.
- Safety (anti-skid) feet must be in good working order and in place.
- Rungs must be free of grease and/or oil.
- Do not place the top of a ladder against a window or an uneven surface.
- Have someone steady the ladder if it cannot be secured otherwise.
- Use fiberglass (nonconductive) ladder if you must work near electrical sources.
- Never over reach when working from a ladder. Keep your body between the rails at all times.
• When working on a ladder, carry small tools on a tool belt. Use a rope to raise and lower heavy tools.
• Never leave a raised or open ladder unattended. Store ladders securely when not in use and during transport.
• Keep mount and dismount areas free of debris and clutter.
• Store ladders away from heat and moisture. Destroy damaged or unsafe ladders.
• Do not tie two ladders together to create a longer ladder.

STEPLADDERS

• Do not place tools or materials on the steps or platform of a stepladder.
• Do not use the top two steps of a stepladder as a step or stand.
• Always level all four feet and lock spreaders in place.
• Do not use a stepladder as a straight ladder.
• Always place ladders on a firm flat surface.

When working on a stepladder, you should be able to reach about 4 feet above the top of the ladder while standing two steps down from the top. For example, most workers should be able to reach an 8-foot ceiling on a 4-foot ladder. Never use the top of a stepladder as a step. Refer to the chart below for recommended ladder heights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Height</th>
<th>Ladder Height should be:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9’</td>
<td>5’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13’</td>
<td>9’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17’</td>
<td>13’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21’</td>
<td>17’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STRAIGHT TYPE OR EXTENSION LADDERS

- All straight or extension ladders must extend at least 3’ beyond the supporting object when used as an access to an elevated work area.
- After raising the extension portion of a two or more stage ladder to the desired height, check to ensure that the safety latches are engaged.
- Position a straight or extension ladder so that the base of the ladder is one foot away from the vertical support for every four feet of working ladder height (e.g., if you are working with eight feet of ladder, place the base of the ladder two feet from the wall).
- When possible, tie the top of a straight or extension ladder to supports. Stake and tie the feet of the ladder.
- Do not stand on the top four rungs of an extension ladder
- Follow manufacture’s guidelines for maximum lengths and overlap requirements or see below as a guide:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ladder Length</th>
<th>Overlap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 36 ft.</td>
<td>3 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 36 to 48 ft.</td>
<td>4 ft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 48 to 60 ft.</td>
<td>5 ft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secure top and bottom of ladder to prevent displacement. All ladders must be equipped with safety (non-skid) feet.

![Ladder with a single support attachment for a pole.](image1)

![Ladder ties to the support at the top.](image2)

![At least 3’ or 3 rungs above supporting surface.](image3)
Portable ladders must be used at such a pitch that the horizontal distance from the top support to the foot of the ladder is about one-quarter of the working length of the ladder (4:1 ratio).