

Ladder Safety

Unsafe conditions and improper use of ladders are notorious causes of workplace-related injuries. By following some simple guidelines you can increase your safety awareness while significantly reducing the potential for injury.

Ladder Choice - Make sure you select the ladder that best suits your task. Different styles of ladders are made for specific heights, weights and uses. Choosing a ladder that is too large or small can increase potential for injury.

Always Inspect - Many ladder-related injuries can be avoided by inspecting and reading all the proper labels and markings. Verify the ladder's weight capacity is sufficient for the user and any additional weight they may carry. Never use a damaged ladder.

Avoid Hazards - Identify and assess your work area before setting up any equipment. If your ladder is metal, avoid power lines that may be positioned overhead, as well as any exposed electrical outlets. Make sure the ladder is a safe distance from doors and walkways. Also ensure that all rings, cleats and steps are visible, solid and dry.

Ladder Positioning - Only use a ladder on level and stable ground. Place the base of a straight or extension ladder at about a 75 degree angle against the wall. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for ladder set-up, and never position an A-frame ladder for use as a straight ladder.

3-Point Contact - Make sure you have at least two feet and one hand on the ladder rungs at all times. While climbing, keep your body in the middle of the steps and always look toward the ladder. Falls from ladders often occur from a loss of balance, so keep your belly button facing the rungs and between the rails.

Assign a Spotter - Have another person assist and hold the ladder.