



## Ladder Safety Info Sheet

Ladder safety is critical at home as well as at the workplace. The spring, summer and fall seasons are popular times for home projects involving ladder use. Various tasks, routine and non-routine, at the workplace may involve the use of ladders.

**No matter how well a ladder is constructed, it will only support you if you are using it properly.**

Potential hazards involved with ladder use include:

- **Falls** – can occur due to overloading or damaged parts of a ladder, slips or loss of balance, reaching too far while working on top of a ladder, standing on the top cap, not setting up the ladder securely, or from traffic below that can accidentally hit the base of the ladder
- **Electricity** – metal ladders are conductive and should not be used near exposed energized parts
- **Falling objects** - objects falling from ladders are a hazard to anyone below the ladder

**Here are basic guidelines that should be followed when using a ladder:**

- Set up the ladder on a firm, solid surface. Do not set up a ladder on a slippery or icy surface.
- Open stepladders fully and lock the spreaders to keep the ladder stable.
- Do not tie ladders together to make them longer and do not place a ladder on boxes or blocks to make it taller.
- Set up straight ladders using the 4 to 1 rule. The distance from the wall to the base of the ladder should be one-fourth the distance from the base of the ladder to where it touches the wall. The rails must be supported equally at the top.
- Always face the ladder when you are climbing up or down. Hold the ladder with both hands while climbing or descending a ladder.
- Use tool belts or bags to carry things up the ladder, so that you can keep both hands properly positioned on the ladder.
- Never carry heavy or bulky items up or down a ladder.
- Never allow more than one person to climb a ladder at a time.
- Keep off ladders if you are prone to dizziness or fainting.
- Secure or have someone hold the ladder bottom.
- Follow all warnings posted on the ladder and do not use the top cap of the ladder as a step.
- Do not stand on the top two steps of a stepladder. Do not climb the back sections of stepladders.
- Do not stand on the top four rungs of a straight ladder.
- Work within the side rails. If your belt buckle goes past the side rail, you are leaning too far.
- Descend and move the ladder as needed to stay close to your work.
- If using a ladder in front of a door, make sure the door is locked or blocked and a warning is posted.

**All ladders should be inspected prior to use.** Ladders with structural defects, corrosion, or other defective parts must be immediately removed from service and tagged with a statement such as “Do Not Use.” Report it to your supervisor.

**The following items should be checked before using the ladder:**

- Make sure all rungs and steps are intact.
- Check that the rungs are clean and free of grease and oil.
- Determine that all nuts, bolts and rivets are tight and in place.
- Remove any ladder with broken parts, corrosion or fire damage.
- Make sure the ladder has adequate length and load limits needed for the job.