



Weekly Safety Meeting

Falls From Ladders

Falls are one of the leading causes of death in industry and construction; and every year falls from ladders make up nearly a third of those deaths. These falls from ladders are preventable and lives can be saved by following the safe work practices we will describe in what follows.

When Should We Use a Ladder?

We should ask ourselves critical questions just before we reach for our old favorite, the ladder. We may want to reach a higher work area and so we must think about the best choice in available equipment to use. While a ladder or stepladder is commonly used, it just may not always be the very best option. So, ask yourself these questions before deciding on the perfect ladder for your job:

- Will you have to hold any heavy items in your hands while on the ladder?
- Is the elevated area high enough that it would require a longer ladder that may turn out to be unstable?
- Will you be working from this height for a long time?
- Do you have to stand on the ladder sideways to accomplish your work tasks?

If your answer is yes to even one of the above questions, then you should consider using something other than a ladder. If possible, use aerial lift equipment like a scissor lift. If you must use a ladder, use one that has a working platform with handrail barricades on the sides (e.g., a platform stepladder).

Whenever you use a ladder or stepladder, take note of the safety practices mentioned in this talk.

- Use the right ladder for the job. For example, ensure the ladder is high enough for you to reach your work area without having to stand on the very top rung;
- When using ladders to access another level, always secure and extend the ladder at least 3 feet above the landing point to provide a safe handhold to exit and enter the ladder in position;
- The base of the ladder should be secured by properly placing the safety feet to provide a grip on the work surface;
- Always wear proper footwear (e.g., non-slip);
- Always place the ladder on stable and level surfaces. Never place it on an uneven surface;
- Always ensure that the ladder is fully extended, checking the extension bar between the side rails;
- Always consider the area around the ladder. Provide a control access zone to this area by placing barriers (e.g., cones) to prevent passersby from walking under or near the ladder while in use. Ask your coworker to act as a lookout;

- Always maintain three points of contact with your ladder;
- Do not carry any tools or materials in your hands when climbing a ladder. Place items in a bucket to raise to your level or a tool belt to carry necessary tools with you;
- Never lean away from the ladder to perform your work tasks. Always keep your body weight in the center of the side rails; and
- Do not use ladders near doorways. If you must use a ladder near a doorway, lock the door or have a coworker help to keep the door closed while you are on the ladder.

Check, Maintain and Store Ladders Well

Before using a ladder, always inspect it thoroughly to ensure there are no visible defects or missing parts, and that it is in good working condition. Use the manufacturer's instruction to inspect it for the right details. A label on the side rail should list the information.

Maintain and store the ladder according to the manufacturer's instruction.

Do not use a faulty ladder (e.g., bent side rail, missing a step, missing or broken spreader bars, broken locking device or mechanism).

Finally, Weight Capacity - The Five Ladder Grade Categories

Another important consideration is to select the correct American National Standards Institute (ANSI) grade category for your ladder. Again, a label side rail lists the type of category. You could fall because your ladder is overloaded and collapses. This rating considers the worker's weight, clothing or protective equipment, weight of tools or supplies that are carried or stored on the ladder.

- Type III (Light Duty): This grade holds up to 200 pounds, a common ladder for home use on projects with painting, reaching tall items, climbing to a roof and more.
- Type II (Medium Duty): This grade holds up to 225 pounds, includes ladders used in construction and other commercial contract work.
- Type I (Heavy Duty): This grade holds up to 250 pounds, often used for industrial applications that require heavy equipment or gear.
- Type IA (Extra Heavy Duty): This grade holds up to 300 pounds. This type supports industrial applications with extra heavy equipment or gear.

LADDERS HOLD SOMETHING IMPORTANT—YOU!

Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

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