

Ladder Safety

Ladders present unique opportunities for unsafe acts and unsafe conditions. Employees who use ladders must be trained in proper selection, inspection, use and storage. Improper use of ladders has caused a large percentage of accidents in the workplace. Use caution on ladders.

Ladder Hazards Include:

- Missing or broken parts;
- Using a ladder with too low of a weight rating;
- Using a ladder that is too short for its purpose;
- Using metal ladders near electrical wires;
- Using ladders as a working platform;
- Objects falling from ladders; and
- Using ladders in uncontrolled high traffic areas.

Ladder Inspection

Inspect ladders before each use and ensure:

- All rungs and steps are free of oil, grease, dirt, etc.;
- All fittings are tight;
- Spreaders or other locking devices are in place;
- Non-skid safety feet are in place;
- No structural defects, all support braces intact;

Red tag and do not use damaged ladders. Most ladders cannot be repaired to manufacturer specifications. If they cannot be repaired to specifications, tag and throw away.

Ladder Storage

Store ladders on sturdy hooks in areas where they cannot be damaged. Store to prevent warping or sagging. Do not hang anything on ladders that are in a stored condition.

Ladder Ratings & Limits

Ladder weight ratings

- I-A 300 pounds (extra heavy duty/professional use)
- I 250 pounds (heavy duty/industrial use)
- II 225 pounds (medium duty/commercial use)
- III 200 pounds (light duty/household use)



Limits on ladder length

- A stepladder shall be no more than 20' high.
- A one-section ladder or individual sections shall not exceed 30'.
- Two section ladders shall not exceed 48'.
- Ladders over two sections shall not exceed 60'. All sections must overlap according to the following criteria:
 - Up to and including 36', overlap of 3'
 - Over 36', up to and including 48', overlap of 4'
 - Over 48', up to 60', overlap of 5'

Ladder Setup

- Place ladder on a clean slip free level surface.
- Ensure all spreaders and locks are fully engaged.
- The rails of an extension ladder shall extend at least 3' above the top support or work area.
- When using an extension ladder, place the ladder base at 1/4 the height (1' out for every 4' up).
- Never allow more than one person on a ladder.
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.
- Use carriers and tool belts to carry objects up a ladder.
- Do not stand above the second step from the top of a stepladder or the fourth rung from the top of an extension ladder. You may lose your balance and fall.
- Do not lean out from the ladder in any direction. A good rule of thumb to use is to keep your belt buckle centered between the two rails.
- Do not allow others to work under a ladder in use.
- Do not climb a closed stepladder. It may slip out from under you.

Ladder Maintenance

- Keep ladders clean.
- Replace worn/broken parts only with those provided by the original manufacturer.
- Do not attempt to repair broken side rails.
- Keep all threaded fasteners properly adjusted.