



LADDER SAFETY



Why Ladder Safety Matters

Falls from ladders are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries. Most ladder incidents can be prevented by selecting the correct ladder, inspecting it before use, and following safe work practices.

Before Using a Ladder

Inspect the Ladder

Check for:

- Cracked, bent, or broken rails
- Missing or damaged rungs
- Loose hardware or braces
- Oil, grease, or slippery substances
- Damaged feet or non-slip pads

Do not use a damaged ladder. Report it immediately.

Choose the Right Ladder

- Use the correct ladder type and height for the job.
- Ensure the ladder is rated for your weight plus tools and materials.
- Never stand on boxes, chairs, or other makeshift climbing devices.

Safe Ladder Setup

Extension Ladders

- Follow the **4-to-1 rule**: For every 4 feet of ladder height, place the base 1 foot away from the wall.
- Extend at least **3 feet above the landing surface** when accessing a roof or elevated platform.
- Secure the ladder whenever possible.

Stepladders

- Fully open the ladder and lock the spreaders.
- Never use a stepladder while folded or leaning against a wall.
- Do not stand on the top cap or top step unless designed for that purpose.

Safe Climbing Practices

Maintain Three Points of Contact

Always:

- Two hands and one foot, or
- Two feet and one hand

Face the Ladder

- Climb up and down facing the ladder.
- Use tool belts or rope systems to raise and lower tools.
- Never carry heavy items in your hands while climbing.

Stay Centered

- Keep your belt buckle between the side rails.
- Do not overreach.
- Climb down and reposition the ladder as needed.

Common Ladder Hazards

- Using a damaged ladder
- Setting up on uneven or slippery surfaces
- Overreaching from the ladder
- Standing on the top step
- Using metal ladders near electrical hazards
- Failing to secure the ladder

Electrical Safety

- Assume all power lines are energized.
- Use a fiberglass ladder when working near electricity.
- Maintain a safe clearance from overhead power lines.

Key Takeaways

- Inspect ladders before each use
- Use the correct ladder for the task
- Maintain three points of contact
- Never overreach or stand on the top step
- Secure ladders and place them on stable surfaces
- Remove damaged ladders from service immediately

Discussion Questions

What ladder hazards have you observed recently, and what actions can we take to prevent falls and injuries?

If I see a damaged ladder, who do I report it to?

For more safety tips and courses, visit ndsc.org

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