

# LADDER SAFETY

Ladder injuries are among the top workers' compensation reported injuries. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that there are more than 164,000 visits to the emergency room related to ladder injuries. Most of the injuries relating to ladders are from falls two feet or less in height.

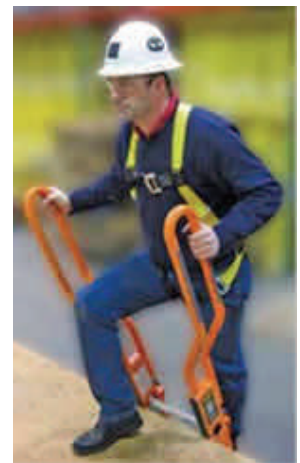
Ladders are one of the most used pieces of equipment in the schools. It is used by nearly all staff, from Teachers to Maintenance workers. It is a tool that is easy to use and maintain, because the simplicity of this tool sometimes employers assume employees are familiar with ladders and know how to use them properly.

As summer comes to an end and schools are in full swing preparing for the arrival of students. We'd like to take this time and remind everyone in the midst of the hustle and bustle to take a moment and refresh your knowledge on ladder safety guidelines.

*"The most recent accident statistics suggest that the working men and women in America abuse and misuse ladders in the workplace as a rule rather than an exception."*  
- Fed OSHA

## Safety Standards

1. Always follow the manufacturer's specifications for the ladder.
2. Check the ladder being used by making sure it has the proper duty rating. This will inform you on the max. weight capacity allowed for each ladder. The combined weight of the user and tools or equipment being used are to be taken into consideration.
3. Place the ladders feet firmly and evenly on the ground.
4. Never set up a ladder in a windy environment. This may cause the ladder to be unstable.
5. When using a folding ladder, do not stand beyond the third rung from the top of the ladder.
6. When using an extension ladder, the top three rungs should exceed the area you are trying to reach. If stepping off onto a landing the side rails shall extend 36 inches or more above the landing surface. When such an extension is not possible, the ladder shall be secured to a rigid support that will assist employees in mounting and dismounting the ladder.
7. Never use a metal ladder around electrical wiring. Metal ladders may be charged by the surrounding electricity causing it to be a unsafe piece of equipment.
8. Ladders shall not be used as platforms, runways, or scaffolds unless designed for such use.
9. Never use a ladder if you are ill. If you get sick, dizzy or panicky while on a ladder, do not try to climb down. Wait. Drape your arms around the rungs and rest your head on the ladder until you feel better. Then climb down.
10. Only one person at a time on a ladder unless the ladder is specifically designed to hold more than one.



# Ladder Maintenance Inspection and Storage

Maintaining the integrity of your ladder is most important. Ladders are continuously used by a variety of staff and because you don't always know how or who used it last it is important to inspect it before every use. It is a good idea to keep good maintenance on every ladder used and ensure that they are stored correctly to prevent any unnecessary damage to the ladder. Below are some tips keep your ladder in a safe, good working condition.

## General Maintenance Inspections

- Ladders should not have any damage, lack of structural integrity, have missing components or loose parts.
- Steps or rungs must be tight and secure to the side rails.
- Movable parts must be tested to ensure they operate without binding or without too much free play.
- Labels should be intact and legible.
- Ladders shall be free of oil, grease or slippery substance.
- Ladders that have been exposed to fire or strong chemicals should be discarded. This can cause the integrity of the ladder to be compromised.
- Accessories such as leg levelers, paint shelves, stand-off shelves, etc. should be in good condition.
- Ladder foot pads must have slip resistant material. This secures the placement of the ladder when being used.



Ladder Leveler

## Storage

- Store wooden ladders where they won't be exposed to excessive heat, sun exposure or dampness.
- Store fiberglass ladders where they will not be exposed to sunlight or other ultra-violet light.
- Ensure ladders are properly supported and secured when in transit.



Slip Resistant Material

# Additional Inspection

When conducting your inspection, there are specific items to look for depending on the type of ladder being used. Below are a few things to check when inspecting an extension, metal, wood, fiberglass or self supporting step ladder.



Extension Ladders	Metal Ladders	Wood Ladders	Fiberglass or Plastic Ladders	Self-Supporting Step Ladders
Check that	Check for	Check for	Check for	Check that
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ropes and pulleys are in good condition.</li> <li>• Ladder extension locks move freely and lock correctly.</li> <li>• Rung locks are on the rails of the top section to ensure that top section will not fall.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose rings, nails, bolts, screws and other metal parts.</li> <li>• Dented rungs or rails.</li> <li>• Sharp edges and corners.</li> <li>• Damage from corrosion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrity of rungs and rails.</li> <li>• Chips, cracks and splinters.</li> <li>• Holes and knots.</li> <li>• Loose parts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cracks, chips and splinters.</li> <li>• Deformed rails or rungs (from heat, chemicals, or environmental exposure).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The two front legs and the two hind legs are the same length.</li> <li>• The spreaders are intact and lock correctly.</li> </ul>

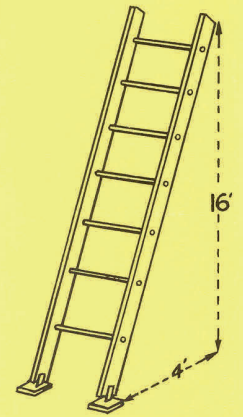
# How to Set Up and Use a Ladder

Ladders are one of our most helpful tools. They help us reach places that would otherwise not be accessible. When used properly they make our tasks safer and easier to do. Ladders are also dangerous and can cause serious injury, including death when used improperly.

Remember when setting up a ladder there are a few guidelines to keep in mind ensuring the safe use of a ladder.

- Rest the base of the ladder away from hallways, passageways, doorways, driveways or heavy traffic areas. Rest the base of ladders on firm, level, dry, non-slippery surfaces.
- Make sure the ladder is straight and secure before climbing it.
- Position extension ladders so that the top section locks and is engaged to the lower section.
- When using a ladder in a crowded area, erect warning signs or barricades to guide traffic away from the base of the ladder. If this is not possible, have someone hold and guard the base of the ladder.
- To provide the correct angle so the extension ladder won't slip, you need to check that for every four feet of ladder height the base is one foot away from the surface it is leaning against.
- Do not carry equipment or materials onto the ladders. Tools and equipment should be hoisted up or have coworkers assist with providing you with equipment.
- Do not over reach, this will cause the ladder to be unbalanced and tip over. If you can not reach the area you are working on, descend and move the ladder.
- When ascending or descending always face the ladder and maintain three points of contact at all times. Three points of contact means, making contact with the ladder at three different points using two feet and one hand or two hands and one foot which is safely supporting the user's weight.

**4 to 1 RATIO  
FOR SAFETY**



**3 Point Contact**

**Keeping you safe is our priority!**