



LADDER SAFETY

Ladders are easier and safer to use when you match them with the appropriate task.

Still, most portable ladder accidents happen when workers fail to inspect ladders regularly, place ladders inappropriately, or ignore safe practices when climbing or descending. The guidelines below address each of these issues.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Move the ladder near the work you’re doing, and work within the side rails of the ladder.
- Angle the ladder properly. The base should extend out no less than one-quarter of the ladder’s length, with a minimum slope of 50 degrees.
- Protect the base of a tall-occupied ladder if vehicles, other workers or moving equipment could strike it.
- Avoid placing a ladder in front of an unlocked/unguarded entrance, exit or doorway.
- Never set a ladder on boxes, tables, trucks, tailgates, man lift platforms or other moveable objects.
- Always nail or lash a ladder in place to prevent it from slipping.
- Select a ladder that will extend at least 36” above the access area it is serving.
- Always face the ladder when ascending and descending.
- Grasp the side rails with both hands; never carry tools up or down the ladder, and always maintain three-point contact.
- Raise/lower heavy loads with a hand line or hoist.
- Immediately inspect any ladder that has collapsed, tipped over or been exposed to oil or grease. Clean and repair the ladder if possible.
- Keep the area around the top and bottom of a ladder free of debris.
- Remove defective ladders from service immediately. Tag or mark defective ladders with “DANGER: DO NOT USE.”
- Don’t paint ladders. Paint can conceal defects.

