

REFERENCE GUIDE

A Loss Control Service from Donegal Insurance Group



Ladder Safety

Every year in the U.S., there are employee injuries and deaths as a result of falls or electrocution from fixed and portable ladder use as well as selecting the incorrect ladder, and poorly-designed or maintained ladders that may collapse under the load placed upon them. Ladders come in two main forms: Fixed and portable. A fixed ladder is a ladder permanently attached to a structure, building or equipment. A portable ladder is one that can be moved from task to task and is either manufactured or job-made.

Basic Safety for All Ladders

- Avoid using ladders during inclement weather, especially during storms and in high wind situations.
- Use the correct ladder for the work being performed, specifically make sure the ladder is the correct height, and rated appropriately for the combined weight of the worker and equipment (tools) or objects being placed on the ladder.
- A metal ladder should never be used to perform any type of electrical work. Non-conductive ladders should be used when within 10' of electrical lines.
- Read all labels on the ladder including safety labels, warnings, rating, and weight capacity.
- Damaged or defective ladders should be properly marked, taken out of service, and disposed.
- See [OSHA's Fact Sheet](#) on safe use of Extension Ladders.
- The same safe work practices in OSHA's Fact Sheet should be used with straight and sectional ladders.
- The area around the base of the ladder should be clear of slip, fall hazards and the base of the ladder should be on a solid, level, secure surface.
- When using an A-frame ladder make sure the spreaders are extended and in locked position.
- Always face the ladder when climbing, working, or descending.
- Do not work on a ladder in high pedestrian traffic areas unless proper safety precautions are in place, including a person assigned as a safety monitor, protection barriers, and signage communicating work with alternate travel paths identified.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes to climb and while working from the ladders.
- Maintain three points of contact while climbing a ladder.
- Avoid overreaching while working on a ladder by working within the side rails of the ladder (keep trunk/stomach between side rails).
- Do not move or adjust a ladder while standing on it.
- Only use accessories that are approved by the ladder manufacturer.

Training

All employees should be trained in the following areas:

- Reading the ladder labels
- Ladder inspection - proper procedures
- Care and Maintenance
- Safety Before You Climb
- Safe Climbing - 3 Point Stance

Training should be written and documented. The use of a ladder inspection program (checklist) is recommended as an integral part of your overall program.

Compliance resources can be obtained at: www.osha.gov

Resources & Additional Information

[OSHA Quick Card Portable Ladder Safety](#)

[American Ladder Institute](#)

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