

LADDER SAFETY

According to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics, 261,930 private industry and state and local government workers missed one or more days of work due to injuries from falls on the same level or to lower levels. The following are tips for ladder inspection, set-up, usage, and storage:

Inspection

- Ladders should be inspected prior to use – look for cracks, bends, damaged footings or spreaders (locking devices).
- Warning signs and labels are to be legible and not painted over.
- Should the ladder be deemed unfit for work, contact supervisor for a replacement.

Set-Up

- Ladders must be set-up on flat level surfaces.
- If setting up in high traffic areas, evaluate blocking off the work area.
- Extension ladders must follow a 4:1 ratio - for every 4 feet of height, the ladder base must be 1 foot away from the wall.
- Avoid setting up ladders near electrical lines; especially metal ladders!!!
- A-frame ladders must have the spreaders locked in place.

Usage

- ALWAYS maintain 3-points of contact with the ladder (2 hands + 1 foot or 2 feet + 1 hand).
- ALWAYS follow the belt buckle rule: keep belt buckle positioned within the side rails of the ladder at all times to maintain center of gravity.
- NEVER extend or reach beyond the sides of the ladder.
- NEVER use the top step of the ladder.
- NEVER exceed the maximum load rating of the ladder.
- NEVER use a metal ladder for electrical work.



Figure 1 IMPROPER ladder usage

Storage

- Store ladders out of direct sunlight and moisture to prevent warping.
- Store ladders in secure locations where only authorized individuals have access.