



Ladder Safety 2025

Falls from ladders are one of the most common, yet easily preventable occupational injuries. Falls from ladders can be severe, even fatal, even at low heights. Below are some important tips and reminders to follow when using a ladder both at work and at home.

Fast Facts

300 Ladder-related fatalities each year

Citations issued by OSHA for ladder violations in 2023
~30000

Falls from ladders requiring ER visits each year
500k

Ladder Selection

- Is it the right type of ladder for the job (Folding/ A-frame, straight ladder, extension)?
- Is the ladder selected tall enough to reach the work safely?
- Is a ladder the right tool for the job, or do I need another type of tool or machine (like an aerial lift/ MEWP, or a scaffold?)
- Read and understand all hazard/warning decals on the ladder before using.
- Always perform a ladder inspection. If it shows any signs of degradation, deformity, or instability, report it to supervision and sign/tag out of service.

Ladder Do's
"Do" carry tools in a tool pouch or a tool belt
"Do" hoist equipment up after you have climbed into place
"Do" keep ladders clean of mud, grease and other substances
"Do" barricade around ladders to protect them from being bumped into.

Ladder Don'ts
"Don't" use the top step of a step ladder
"Don't" place your feet on both sides of the ladder
"Don't" "walk" or rock a ladder from side to side to move it into place
"Don't" place a ladder in front of a doorway

Ladder Placement and Use

- Only set on a solid, stable, level surface (not tables, boxes, crates, hollow/non-load bearing flooring)
- Never place near railings or edges.
- Never exceed weight capacity (yourself AND your tools)
- Maintain 3 points of contact
- Ascend/descend facing ladder
- Use a tool belt or hoist tools and equipment up to working area. Never carry tools/equipment by hand when using ladder.
- Never stand on the top 3 rungs of a ladder
- Never reach or lean outside of the ladder. Stay within the side railings to maximize stability. Take the time to descend and reposition the ladder as needed.
- Use the 4:1 rule - for every 4 feet the ladder rises, place the ladder 1 foot further away from the wall.

Examples of Unsafe Ladders

Contact ESH for assistance or questions if you are unsure if a ladder is safe to use.



Bent/damaged frames or steps



Rust or corrosion



Cracked frame



UV damage, decals missing or illegible

Additional Resources :

NIOSH Ladder Fatality Case Study: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/state/23KY096.pdf>

OSHA Portable Ladder Fact Sheet: https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/publications/portable_ladder_qc.pdf

American Ladder Institute: Basic Ladder Safety <https://www.americanladderinstitute.org/page/BasicLadderSafety>

For additional ladder safety questions or to report any unsafe conditions or concerns, contact ESH at esh@umbc.edu or call 5-2918.