

What's the hazard?

Ladders are a common feature on your construction sites, but care must be taken to make sure their safe use.

How do I know if I am at risk?

You are at risk if any of the following ladder hazards exist on your worksite:

- Using the incorrect type of ladder for the work
- Using a damaged ladder
- Setting up on uneven ground
- Ladders not held, tied off, or secured
- Contact with electrical wires or equipment
- Workers not using three-point contact when climbing and descending
- Overreaching, twisting or bending
- Standing or sitting on the top or pail shelf of a stepladder

What precautions can be taken?

As with all work, safe work procedures should be followed when using a ladder. Prior to using a ladder, you should perform a job hazard analysis to identify and address all hazards in the work area.



Figure 1: Identify & Discard Defective Equipment

Safe ladder procedures to consider:

- Select the appropriate ladder for the task. like a stepladder or extension ladder
- Before using a ladder, always inspect it carefully:
- Check rails for cracks, bends or defects
- Look for broken or missing rungs
- Check the braces
- Stepladder – make sure the ladder fully opens and that the spreaders will lock
- Make sure the feet are not worn or broken
- Make sure that the base of your ladder is placed on a firm, level and non-slippery surface
- Isolate your work area with signs, pylons and barricade tape when there is a risk of the ladder being struck by a person or vehicle
- Do not use a step ladder as a support or brace for a work platform or plank
- Do not overload the ladder. Only one worker at a time is allowed on a single-width ladder
- Always face the ladder and maintain three points of contact when climbing up or down
- Never stand or sit on the top (pail shelf) of a stepladder
- Keep your body between the ladder rails. If you cannot reach, move the ladder
- Identify any overhead conductors in your work area and stay the required distance from them
- Be sure the two sections of an extension ladder overlap according to the manufacturer's instructions
- Check that all locks are properly engaged
- Avoid setting up or using your ladder during strong winds, heavy rain or snow, or when icy conditions are present

Discussion topics

Obtain a stepladder or extension ladder that you can use during the discussion to demonstrate key points.

- Have you or anyone you know been injured from falling off a ladder? How could the incident have been avoided?
- What should be assessed before using a ladder?

True or false

1) Do not lean to reach items while standing on the ladder.

True: Keep your belt buckle between the rails as an indicator.

2) Do not use a step ladder in a folded and leaning position in place of a straight ladder.

True: Step ladders should only be used in a fully open position with side braces and cross braces locked.

3) Two stepladders can be used to support a work platform.

False: Stepladders should not be used to support work platforms.

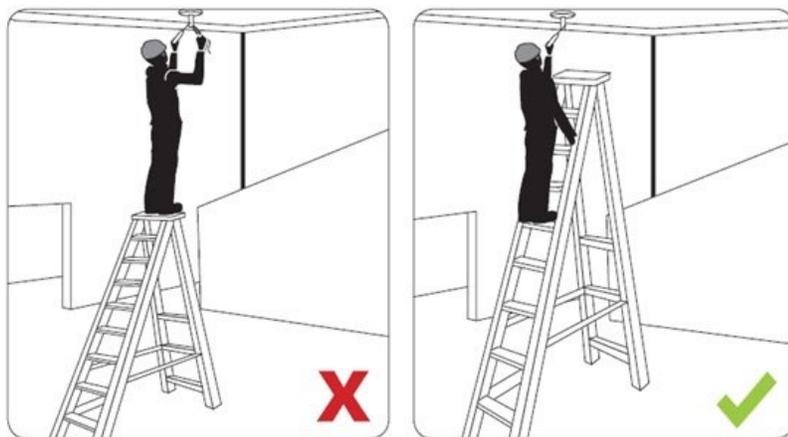


Figure 2: Proper Use of a Ladder



Figure 3: Maintain Three Points of Contact

**To report a serious workplace injury, contact the
24/7 Occupational Health and Safety Emergency Line at 902-628-7513**