

Ladder Safety: Preventing Workplace Injuries Through Proper Use

Falls from elevated surfaces remain one of the top 10 causes of workplace accidents. Many of these incidents result from a failure to follow basic ladder safety procedures. To reduce the risk of injury, it is essential to adhere to best practices when setting up and using ladders.

Setting Up Your Ladder Safely

Choosing the right ladder is crucial. Always check the length and duty rating to ensure it meets the requirements of the job. The ladder should extend at least three feet over the roofline or working surface.

Before using a ladder, inspect it thoroughly for any of the following issues:

Loose or damaged steps

Worn or defective rungs

Malfunctioning spreaders

Faulty rung locks (rung dogs)

Unstable safety feet

Any other structural damage

Ensure the work area is clear of hazards. Never place a ladder in front of a door unless it is locked, blocked, or properly guarded. Avoid using metal ladders near power lines or electrical equipment—opt for wooden or fiberglass ladders instead.

Before climbing, confirm that all locks on extension ladders are engaged. Set the ladder on a firm, level surface. If necessary, use flat wooden boards to stabilize the base on uneven or soft ground. For straight, single, or extension ladders, maintain a 75-degree angle to the surface.

Applying the 1:4 Rule for Stability

For every four feet of ladder height, position the base one foot away from the wall or surface it rests against. This ensures a stable and secure setup.

Using Ladders with Caution

While using a ladder, keep the following safety measures in mind:

Do not exceed the ladder's maximum load rating, which includes both the user and any materials being carried.

Only one person should be on a ladder at any time.

Keep your body centered between the rails to maintain balance. Avoid leaning too far to the side or overreaching—descend and reposition the ladder instead.

Never stand on the top step, bucket shelf, or the rear section of a stepladder.

Always face the ladder when ascending or descending.

Never leave an unattended raised ladder.

If you feel dizzy or fatigued, slowly step down and take a break.

Wear non-slip footwear for added grip and stability.

By following these ladder safety guidelines, workers can minimize the risk of falls and injuries, ensuring a safer workplace environment for all.

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