

Ladder Safety

More workers are injured in falls from ladders than any other elevated surface. Most of these falls happen because workers are either using the wrong ladder or the ladder is being used improperly.

Types of Ladders and Their Use

Extension Ladders

- Must be 7-10 feet longer than the **vertical** distance to the upper contact point on the structure (for example: 30 vertical feet to contact point requires a 37-40 foot ladder)
- Must have a minimum three feet of overlap to the upper contact point
- Sections must be assembled so that the top section or fly is resting on the bottom section or base
- Extension ladders do not have to be tied off, but you must ensure that the ladder cannot be accidentally moved or displaced

Standard Stepladders

- Designed to only be used in the open position with the spreaders locked into place
- Must have metal spreaders or locking arms and cannot be longer than 20 feet
- Should only be used on surfaces that have a firm, level footing such as floors, large area platforms, and slabs
- Designed to be used by one person at a time
- **Never use the top of the ladder as a step**
- **Never use a stepladder by leaning it against a wall or other vertical surface**

Duties Ratings

These ratings are to include the weight of the person on the ladder and the material being transported. Exceeding these limits could cause the ladder to fail and result in serious injury.

- Special Duty (IAA) 375 pounds
- Extra Heavy Duty (I-A) 300 pounds
- Heavy Duty (I) 250 pounds
- Medium Duty (II) 225 pounds
- Light Duty (III) 200 pounds

Best Practices

- Wear shoes that have non-slip soles
- Climb facing the ladder and always keep your body centered between the rails
- Maintain three points of contact at all times (both feet and at least one hand)
- Raise and lower heavy loads with a hand line or hoist
- Never move, shift, or extend ladders when they are occupied
- Inspect your ladder before every use for cracks or broken rungs/steps
- Defective ladders should be removed from service and marked as such
- All ladders, except step ladders, should have slip resistant safety feet
- Keep the areas at the top and bottom of the ladder free of slip and trip hazards
- Ladders that could contact exposed electrical equipment need to have nonconductive side rails
- Be aware of any overhead power lines in your work area

