

Ladder Safety

We've all seen pictures like this on the Internet. Being human, we can often be very creative while not being very smart.



Here is what 1,000 people admitted when responding to a ladder safety survey conducted by Home Safety Council and Werner Ladders:

52 percent: Work on uneven ground

47 percent: Reach further than they should

36 percent: Stand on the top two steps

The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that more than 500,000 people are injured each year while using ladders.

Why do people do this? The easy answer is that they don't know any better, which may be true. But we have a comfort level when we use ladders. They are very familiar to us, a typical household item, and we trust that we won't get hurt while using them. We may think that we know exactly what to do and how to do it when it comes to using ladders. But there are many variables that need to be considered.

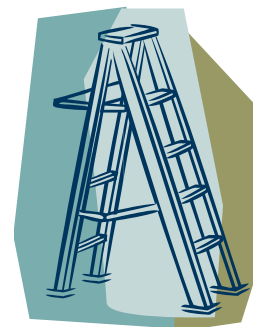
Please recognize the danger of ladders. Some people think that ladder safety starts when they step on the ladder, but it begins much earlier than that.



DO NOT follow this example ↑

Four common causes of ladder accidents:

1. **Using the wrong type of ladder:** Choose the right type of ladder for conditions: stepladder (A-frame), extension ladder, single ladder, mobile ladder. Choose the ladder made of the right materials for the job: wood, aluminum or fiberglass. Choose a ladder that will allow you to reach the height you need to reach. Choose the appropriate weight capacity for your body weight, including tool belts and PPE (personal protective equipment.)



2. **Using worn or damaged ladders:**

Inspect the ladder before you use it to make sure it is in good condition. Check for broken or cracked steps and rails. Are the ladder feet in good condition and will they provide the traction necessary? If you find a worn or damaged ladder, be sure to take it out of service so it cannot be used by anyone else. A worn or damaged ladder, if it cannot be reliably repaired to manufacturer's specifications, should be dismantled and discarded so it cannot possibly be used by others.



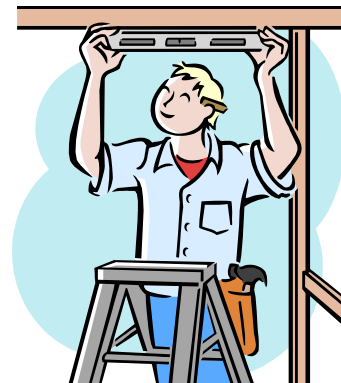
3. **Incorrect use of ladders:** Always use the ladder for its intended use. (Ladders are not scaffolds.) Always maintain 3 points of contact, which means you can't carry things while climbing up or down a ladder. Do not stand on the cap (top) of a stepladder or on the top step. You also should not stand on the top 3 steps of an extension or straight ladder. Do not attempt to overreach when on a ladder. Get down and move the ladder. This also applies to trying to move the ladder while on it: *don't even think about it!!* A stepladder should always be open and locked in position when used and never unopened and leaning against something for climbing.

4. **Incorrect placement of ladders:** The ground should be level and firm. If not, there are ladders that accommodate those conditions. Never place the ladder in front of a door unless the door is locked or blocked from the other side. Observe the 4-to-1 rule when using an extension ladder.



NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) has developed an app to help position your straight or extension ladder in compliance with the 4-to-1 rule:

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/falls/>



Ladder safety is critical. Falls from ladders can result in major injuries requiring long-term recoveries. Prevent falls from ladders.