



MAFES Dawg Tracks

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Safety Tips: Portable Ladder Safety



Did you know? Falls from portable ladders, step, straight, combination and extension, are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. I dare say that portable ladders are used in our entire university system and our homes on a very regular basis. With this point in the forefront, it's probably a good idea to review some rules for safe use of portable and extension ladders.

Following are some good rules to follow that will help to reduce the potential for an injury, if we practice them:

- ✓ Always place the ladder on firm and level surfaces – check to make sure that the ladder is stable. If you have to locate the ladder on soft ground, be sure to get some boards that are wide enough to support the feet of the ladder.
- ✓ Do not set the ladder on top of a drum, a chair, a stack of pallets or other objects to gain more height. Get a taller ladder. Placing a ladder on one of the areas mentioned above is like an accident looking for somewhere to happen.
- ✓ Do not set up a ladder in front of a door unless the door is locked or blocked. If you have a buddy with you, then you can ask him to stand in front of the door to keep people from coming in and maybe knocking you off the ladder.
- ✓ Never lean a ladder against a surface that isn't strong enough to support your weight, like a window or an object that might move under your weight.
- ✓ Make sure that the spreaders on stepladders are fully extended and locked in place and that the locking devices on extension ladders are secured.
- ✓ Remember the 4-to-1 rule: Place the base of the ladder 1 foot from the wall for every 4 feet between the base and the support point. (Example- The base of the ladder is 8 feet to the support point-the ladder should be 2 feet from the building).
- ✓ Extend extension ladders at least 3 feet above the support point (like the edge of the roof).
- ✓ Make sure that the upper section of an extension ladder overlaps and rests on the bottom section. The overlap should always be on the climbing side of the ladder. For ladders of 36 feet or more, the overlap should be at least 3 feet.
- ✓ Always be sure to secure the bottom and the top of ladders.

Tips that help to prevent falls from ladders-

- Select the right ladder for the job. (correct height and type)
- Always inspect the ladder before use.
- Follow ladder rules and regulations.
- Use common sense – only one person on a ladder at a time.
- Hold on while you climb and while you work.
- Don't over reach; get down off the ladder to move it.
- Report safety problems with a ladder immediately as you find them.

Checklist for Ladder Inspection-

As we mentioned in the safety tips above, a ladder inspection should be conducted each time before you use a ladder. Following are some hints to include in a daily checklist for ladder inspection:

- Check the rungs of the ladder to see that they are in good condition, free of mud, debris, grease.
- Check the side rails for cracks or splits.
- On metal ladders that all the parts are lubricated.
- Rope on extension ladders is in good condition with no frays or worn places.
- Spreaders and/or locking devices are in good working condition.
- Splinters or sharp edges have been filed down.
- Safety feet are solid and in place.
- Metal ladders are free of dents or bent parts.

Other Safety Tips-

- Always maintain a 3-point (2 hands and 1 foot or 2 feet and 1 hand) contact on the ladder when you're climbing.
- Keep your body near the middle of the steps or rungs.
- Always climb with your body facing the ladder.
- Don't carry hand tools when you are climbing the ladder. Ask someone to assist you with handing them up to you.
- Stay off of the top 2 steps of the ladder.

Ladder Safety- Dos and Don'ts

DO:

- **Be sure the bottom of the ladder is secure before you begin to climb.**
- **Use a wood or fiberglass ladder next to power lines - not a metal ladder.**
- **Avoid reaching too far when you're on a ladder.**
- **Allow only one person at a time on the ladder.**

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DON'T:

- **Use boxes, chairs or anything else in place of a ladder or use these for a ladder extension.**
- **Walk under a ladder when someone is on it.**
- **Climb a ladder if you feel dizzy, ill or are afraid of heights.**

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

GEAR UP FOR SAFETY!!

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BE ALERT <> BE AWARE

BE ALIVE

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