

Ladder Safety: Set It Up Right, Climb It Right

COMPANY

PROJECT

DATE

PRESENTED BY

A ladder fall usually happens on a short, routine climb that nobody thought twice about. We use ladders every day on this job, so every climb counts. A minute of checking and setup is what keeps a quick task from becoming an injury that ends a career.

Before you climb

- Look the ladder over before you use it: rungs, side rails, feet, locks and spreaders.
- If a rung is broken or missing, a rail is split, or parts are corroded, mark it or tag it "Do Not Use" and take it out of service until it's repaired.
- Use a ladder only for what it was designed for. It isn't a plank, a brace or a lever.
- Anywhere you or the ladder could touch exposed energized electrical equipment, use a ladder with nonconductive side rails, such as fiberglass.

Set it up right

- Stand the ladder on a stable, level surface. On a slippery surface, secure it or use slip-resistant feet, and still take care placing it.
- Extension ladders: set the foot out from the top support about one-quarter of the ladder's working length, measured along the ladder between the foot and the top support.
- When the ladder is your way up to a roof or upper floor, the side rails must reach at least 3 feet above the landing. If they can't, secure the top and give people something to hold on to when they step on and off.
- In a doorway, walkway or driveway, secure the ladder or barricade around it so traffic can't knock it. Keep the area at the top and bottom clear.
- Stepladders: open them all the way and lock the spreaders before you climb.

Climb it right

- Face the ladder going up and coming down.
- Keep at least one hand on the ladder while you move. Don't carry anything that could throw you off balance: use a tool belt, or pull materials up with a line.
- Never stand on the top or the top step of a stepladder, and don't climb the cross-bracing on the back unless it has steps made for climbing.
- Never move, shift or extend a ladder while someone is on it. If you have to lean to reach, climb down and move the ladder.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

You're hanging a fixture and the box is just out of reach. The stepladder is already open, and standing on the top step would get you there. Your partner says, "It's one second, just step up." What do you do, and what do you tell your partner?

Questions for the crew

1. What do you check on a ladder before you climb it?
2. How far out from the wall does the foot of an extension ladder go?
3. What do you do with a ladder that has a split rail?
4. Which ladder do you use near live electrical equipment, and why?

Check it, set it right, face it, and keep a hand on it, every climb.

Sources: 29 CFR 1926.1053, Ladders; 29 CFR 1926.1060, Training requirements

Drafted with AI for review by a competent person. Clever Rook writes from the official regulation text it cites, but it doesn't know your site. Check it against your conditions and your company's safety program before use. Not legal advice.

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REVIEWED BY (COMPETENT PERSON)

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