

# Step Right Up to Ladder Safety



At some point in your life, you have probably used a ladder to change a light bulb, paint a wall or reach boxes stacked on a shelf. This is so common that we hardly think about their use, but every year many people have life-altering or life-ending events due to falls from ladders.

The following safety tips can help prevent ladder accidents:

## Before Use

- Choose the right ladder for the job. Designed for many different uses, ladders come in various lengths and with various load ratings. By knowing the strength and weight rating for your ladder you can choose the right one for your task.
- Inspect ladders before using, looking carefully at all parts. Check the rungs and siderails for broken, missing, loose or greasy parts. Ensure the locking spreaders are in good condition, and check the feet to make sure they are sturdy and have clean, non-slip soles.
- Defective ladders shall be tagged and removed from service until repaired or destroyed.

## During Use

- Place the step ladder on a solid, flat surface. Don't lean it against a wall or place on top of boxes, barrels or other unstable foundations. Always position your ladder within easy reach of your work.
- Open the ladder fully, lock the spreaders and move the work shelf into place. If working in a doorway, lock the door, block the foot traffic area and place warning signs.
- Face the ladder and keep both hands free to climb by placing tools in a tool belt or a bucket that can be hoisted up after you climb. Stop two steps down from the top for better stability.
- Prevent tipping by working smoothly, avoiding vigorous movements. Never overreach your work zone.
- Stay alert, and don't use a ladder if you are feeling ill or under the influence of medications or alcohol.
- Avoid outside ladder work on wet and stormy days, as wind and slippery surfaces cause many ladder accidents.
- Only one employee shall work from the same ladder unless the ladder is designed to accommodate more than one person.
- When ascending or descending a ladder, employees shall face the ladder and maintain three points of contact.

## After Use and Maintenance

- Oil the spreaders regularly to keep the mechanism working smoothly.
- Always store your ladders in a clean area away from heat or dampness.
- At home, store the ladder where small children cannot play on it.