



## Ladder Safety

Falls are the most common workplace accident. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, slips, trips, and falls accounted for 300,000 plus injuries, of which 800 that led to fatalities in one year. Of those fatalities 20% were falls from a ladder. That is why ladders are regulated under Subpart D, "Walking-Working Surfaces" in OSHA's general industry standard.

Read and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.

Avoid electrical hazards! – Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.

Always inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.

Always maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing. Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing (see diagram).

Only use ladders and appropriate accessories (ladder levelers, jacks, or hooks) for their designed purposes.

Ladders must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps, or feet.

Do not use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.

Do not use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.

Use a ladder only on a stable, and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.

Do not place a ladder on boxes, barrels, or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.

Do not move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.

An extension or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (see diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.

The proper angle for setting up a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see diagram).

A ladder placed in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.



Be sure that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.

Do not exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.

#### Conclusion

Because falls from ladders are the most common causes of serious workplace injuries and fatalities. It's important to comply with the OSHA General Industries regulations of Subpart D "Walking and Working Surfaces". By identifying potential hazards and using the right ladder in the right way, you can help prevent ladder related falls from occurring in the first place.