

Ladders are used every day on job sites and in the workplace. They are also one of the least noticed pieces of equipment that may present a major hazard. Most ladder accidents involve unsafe practices and conditions. Help ensure ladder safety with proper planning, inspection, set up, usage, and maintenance.

Proper Planning – Selecting the Proper Ladder for the Job

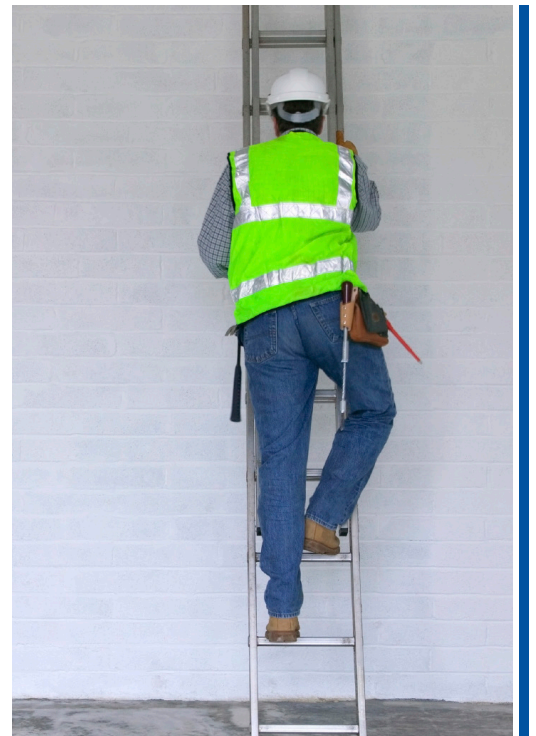
- Make sure the ladder is the correct height and length for your project
- Purchase ladders that have an adequate weight capacity. Many ladders have this printed on them
- Consider the construction of the ladder. For example, metal ladders should not be used around electricity. Instead choose wood or fiberglass ladders.
- Make sure you have a spare ladder on hand in case you have to take one out of service.

Inspection

- Inspect ladders daily.
- Ensure rails and rungs are not cracked, bent, loose, or missing.
- Clean any dirty, oily, or slippery rungs before climbing
- Make there are no bolts, rivets, fasteners, etc. missing.
- When using step ladders, hold the ladder open properly and make sure the spreaders are not damaged.
- If a ladder is in disrepair, it must be tagged and taken out of service.

Setup – Step Ladder

- Make sure the feet of the ladder are level and positioned solidly on the ground.
- Ensure the ladder has two spreaders that can open and remain secure.
- Do not use a step ladder in the closed position as an extension ladder. The legs are not designed for this and could kick out causing injuries.



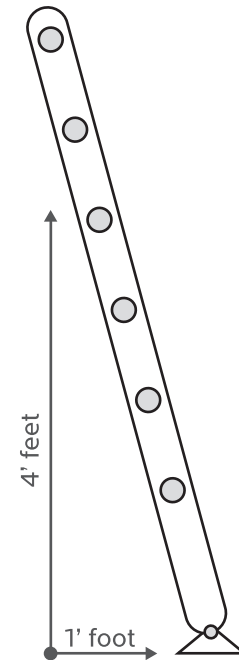
Setup – Extension Ladder

- Make sure feet of the ladder are level and positioned solidly on the ground.
- The ladder should be secure at the top. (If the ladder is used to access other levels, it should extend at least 36" above the access area.)
- If needed, secure the bottom of the ladder to keep it from moving.
- Adjust the ladder to the proper angle using the 4:1 ratio. For every four feet in vertical height, the base of the ladder should extend out one foot.

Usage

- Make sure you are facing the ladder at all times.
- Maintain at least three points of contact while climbing the ladder.
- Never use the top three rungs on an extension ladder.
- Never use the top two steps on a step ladder. If you must go higher use a taller ladder.
- Do not over-reach while on the ladder.
- Do not shift, move, or extend the ladder while you are on it.
- Do not load the ladder beyond the maximum intended weight.
- Keep ladders away from slippery surfaces.
- Keep the areas around the top and bottom of the ladder should be kept clear.
- Do not carry heavy and bulky items up or down the ladder.

1:4 Ratio



Maintenance

- Store ladders so that they will not warp, sag, or become damaged in any other way.
- To maintain proper control over your ladders, do not loan them out to other contractors.
- Make sure ladders are secure during transportation.
- Keep your ladders free from oil, grease, and other chemicals that could cause damage.
- Always tag, remove, and discard any ladders that are in disrepair.

Available Resources:

NIOSH Smart Phone App

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-06-17-13.html>

IMPORTANT NOTICE - The information and suggestions presented by Western National Insurance Company in this Technical Bulletin are for your consideration in your loss prevention efforts. They are not intended to be complete or definitive in identifying all hazards associated with your business, preventing workplace accidents, or complying with any safety related, or other, laws or regulations. You are encouraged to alter them to fit the specific hazards of your business and to have your legal counsel review all of your plans and company policies.