

Ladder Safety

While most of us are familiar with the simple act of climbing a ladder, ladders can potentially be unsafe if they are not maintained, set up, or used properly. The following is a few basic tips and reminders to keep in mind the next time you use a ladder. As always, preventative measures are crucial to ensuring that you avoid ladder accidents.

Before you set up a ladder for use, inspect it for any defects and make sure it is in good working condition; if it is not, immediately tag it out of service and notify your supervisor. When inspecting your ladder, watch out for loose steps or rungs, and make sure that nails and other fasteners are tightly secured. The base of the ladder should also be checked for damage; the base keeps the ladder from slipping and needs to be in good condition.

When setting up your ladder for use, always make sure that it is on solid ground, and against a solid surface. Ice or mud can cause slips, so watch out for both. Never try to position the ladder on top of a box or barrel, your risk of falling will be greatly increased. Be sure to look out for electrical wiring or equipment, if you must work near these hazards be sure that the side rails are non-conductive. Before climbing, check the bottom of your shoes for any grease or oil; slippery soles increase your risk of falling.

Now that you're ready to climb, use both hands to hold the side rails, and always face the ladder. Remember that the majority of ladders are meant to only hold one person at a time; the additional weight of another person could cause the ladder to be thrown off balance. If you feel wobbly or unsure, ask someone to hold the ladder while you climb. If you need to reach to the side, climb down and reposition your ladder. Leaning too far to the side could make you lose your balance, or otherwise cause the ladder to topple over.

If you need to take a break from your work, climb down to solid ground. Never use a ladder as a seat; it is not intended to carry your weight. When your work is done for the day, store your ladder in an upright and closed position, making sure it is in an area that is free from potential moisture. Using these common-sense precautions can help avoid the risk of potential injury or accident, and help you get through your workday in a safe manner.

The above information is not a substitute for professional medical advice and is for general informational purposes only. Consult a physician in all matters relating to your health, particularly in matters that may require diagnosis or medical attention. Any action taken as a result of the information provided above is taken at your own discretion.

