

RISK CONTROL CONSULTING

Portable Ladder Safety

Falls from portable ladders are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. Many work site injuries are caused by accidents involving ladders that are not properly set up or used safely. Employers must train employees to recognize and minimize ladder-related hazards. Following these guidelines can help ensure worker safety.

Before using any ladder, check its condition:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure there are no broken, cracked, or missing rails
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rungs are not slippery from grease or oil
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rungs are parallel, level and uniformly spaced
<input type="checkbox"/>	Wooden ladders are not coated with any material obscuring defects (paint, glue, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ladders with structural or other defects are tagged "Dangerous: Do Not Use" and removed from service until repaired

Report the problem and then tag the ladder with a warning sign, such as "*Defective*" or "*Do Not Use.*" A competent person should periodically inspect all ladders and remove damaged ladders from use until they are repaired.

Selecting a Ladder:

- Choose the appropriate type and size ladder for the job, including correct fittings, and safety feet.
- Near electrical conductors or equipment, use only ladders with non-conductive side rails.
- When using the ladder to gain access to an upper landing surface, be sure that the side rails extend above the top support point by at least 36 inches.
- Rungs and steps of portable metal ladders are corrugated, dimpled, coated with skid-resistant materials, or otherwise treated.
- Maximum intended load is not exceeded. This include the total load (weight and force) of employee and all tools, equipment and materials being carried.



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Correctly Place the Ladder:

- Place the base of a straight ladder out away from the wall or edge of the upper level about one foot for every four feet of vertical height (1:4 Ratio).
- Set the ladder on solid footing, against a solid support.
- Never try to increase the height of a ladder by standing it on other objects, such boxes, or barrels, or by splicing two ladders together
- To avoid slipping on a ladder, check your shoes for oil, grease, or mud and wipe it off before climbing.
- When placed in passageways, doorways, or driveways are secured to prevent accidental displacement or are guarded by a temporary barricade (e.g. traffic cones, caution tape).



Ladder Rules:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Always maintain 3 Points of Contact
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Face Ladder when ascending or descending
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Avoid leaning or overreaching while on the ladder
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Do not stand on the top two rungs of a ladder
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Keeps your hands free – use a tool belt or hand line
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Climb the ladder carefully, facing it and using both hands.

Properly Store Ladders:

- Tying, blocking, or otherwise securing portable ladders against movement.
- Keeping ladders away from doorways or walkways unless they can be protected by barriers.
- Keeping the area around the top and base of the ladder clear. Do not run hoses, extension cords, or ropes on a ladder; these may create obstructions.

Additional Safety Tips

- Ladders should never be used sideways as platforms, runways, or scaffolds.

Tribal First Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice. For more information on this topic, please contact Tribal First Risk Control Consulting at (888) 737-4752 or riskcontrol@tribalfirst.com.