

Selecting the Right Ladder For the Job

Ladders Part 1

Falls from portable ladders are one of the leading causes of occupational fatalities and injuries. It is worth all of our time to take a little more care in our approach to ladder safety.

Types of Ladders

Stepladder Single Ladder Extension Ladder



Material

- Common ladder materials: metal, wood, fiberglass
- A metal ladder should be avoided if work is near sources of electricity

Working Height

How many rungs can you stand on?

- With a stepladder, it is not safe to stand on the top step or stand/sit on the top cap
- With a single/extension ladder, the top three rungs are not safe to stand on

Max Weight

This weight includes:

- Your weight
- The weight of clothing and protective equipment
- The weight of tools and supplies carried
- The weight of tools and supplies stored on the ladder

Ladders are rated by the maximum load they can carry. Each ladder is required to be labeled with the maximum load it can carry. Remember - There is no correlation between ladder length and max load carried! Do not assume a longer ladder can handle more weight.



DON'T
do this!

A common mistake is to use a folded stepladder, leaning against a wall like a single ladder. This is unsafe because the anti-slip feet at the bottom of a stepladder are designed to sit level on the ground and might slide out if leaned against a wall.



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Sources:
Occupational Safety and Health Administration. United States Department of Labor.
laddersafety.org. American Ladder Institute. 2011.