Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting

Apollo MECHANICAL CONTRACTORS
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Home Healthy - Home Safe

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Ladder Safety

Ladders are an essential tool on many jobsites and at homes across the United States. Since ladders have such a widespread application and the inherent dangers that come with using a ladder, they are responsible for many injuries both at and away from the jobsite.

4 Main Contributors of Ladder Accidents

- **Selecting the Wrong Type of Ladder-** Choosing the right tool can make all the difference when it comes to doing your job safely. There are a few things to consider when choosing the right ladder for the task you are performing:
    1. Type of ladder: Choose the ladder for the right application for the work needing to be performed.
    2. Height of the ladder: Choose a ladder that will allow you to reach your work safely and does not cause you stand on the top two rungs of the ladder.
    3. Weight Capacity: Each ladder is designed and marked for a specific weight capacity the ladder can safely hold. Make sure the ladder you choose is rated to handle not only your weight, but the weight of your tools and/or materials.
- **Using Worn or Damaged Ladders-** The use of old, worn, or damaged ladders is a major contributor to ladder accidents. Just like anything else, ladders have a shelf life. Depending on care, use and storage ladders tend to break down. Old, Worn, or damaged ladders can be extremely dangerous as they can break easily while being used and can caused serious injuries. To protect yourself, perform an inspection of the ladder's rungs, rails, cross-bracing, rivets, and feet for wear or damage. If damage is found do not use the ladder, and if at work danger tag the ladder and remove it from site.
- **Incorrect Use of Ladders-** Human error is a leading cause of ladder accidents. Never use a ladder in any other way than what the manufacturer intended it to be used for. While using a ladder always maintain 3 POINTs OF CONTACT to ensure stability and do not carry items while climbing. Never reach outside the rails of the ladder for it may cause you to become unstable and fall. It is much safer to get off the ladder, move the ladder where you need it, and climb back up. Always place ladders at the correct climbing angle (75 degrees); this can be tested by standing with your feet below the bottom rung of the ladder, reach out, your hands should touch the 3rd rung from the bottom. Never lengthen or alter and ladder in anyway.
- **Incorrect Placement of Ladders-** When positioning a ladder for use; always make sure where you are placing it is level and firm ground that will restrict the ladder from slipping out from underneath you. If using the ladder for access to an upper level, extend the ladder 3ft or 3 rungs above the landing. Ladders should never be placed in front of a door that has not been locked, blocked or guarded from opening. Before climbing the ladder; always secure it from accidental displacement by way of tying the ladder off on the top and the bottom or have another person hold the ladder for stability.

HEALTH OR SAFETY REMINDER: Ladder-related incidents led to more than 150 worker fatalities and more than 20,000 nonfatal injuries in 2015, according to Bureau of Labor and Statistics.

Ladders ranked sixth on OSHA's annual "Top 10" list of most cited violations in 2019.

Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. How can you test if a ladder has been setup at the correct climbing angle?
2. Is a worker's weight the only thing to consider when picking a ladder with the right weight capacity?
3. What do you do if you find damage on a ladder during your preuse inspection?