

Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



Home Healthy - Home Safe

Date: Jan. 2022

Using a Stepladder Safely

Stepladders are commonly used in the construction industry, but they require careful use. They are not designed for any degree of side loading and are relatively easily overturned. Before going straight to using a step ladder, ask yourself if there is any substitution equipment you can use instead. Many people assume ladders are safe, but did you know according to the CDC 43% of fatal falls nationwide involve a ladder and in the work industry 20% of all fall injuries involve ladders. According to OSHA Ladders were the 5th most frequent cited standards in 2020. Ladders should be an alternate option for access, not our first choice.

Before using a ladder, use the bullet points below to ensure safe use:

- Stepladders are positioned on level ground and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Avoid over-reaching. Keep your body centered on the middle of the ladder.
- Do not use makeshift or home-made ladders. If a ladder is damaged, do not use it.
- Make sure all feet of the ladder are on a firm, dry, level surface.
- Be sure to clear the ground area around the ladder before climbing.
- Check the ladder carefully for any cracks or loose pieces.
- Only use stepladders ladders in a fully open position. Lock the side braces and cross braces before climbing.
- Do not use a stepladder as a straight ladder in a folded and leaning position.
- Always wear proper footwear with good tread when climbing.
- Do not stand on the top two steps of the ladder unless they are designed for standing.
- Watch for people working under or around the ladder. Use barricades to prevent foot traffic.
- Do not lean to reach items while standing on the ladder.
- Get someone to assist you when working with a ladder.
- Avoid lifting or carrying any items while climbing up or down the ladder. Use tool buckets and rope if needed.
- Do not use stepladders to support work platforms.
- Do not separate 1 extension ladder into two separate ladders.

HEALTHY OR SAFETY REMINDER: Take ladder safety home! Annually on average 500,000 falls occur from ladders, of those 97% occur in non-occupational settings, such as home and farms!

Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. Who in your group has fallen off a ladder?
2. When was the last time you did something sketchy on a ladder at home?
3. Have you ever explained ladder safety or any other safety topics with your loved ones at home?