

Straight Ladders

In English

En español

Some Things to Know Before You Give Your Talk

As a supervisor, you know the importance of straight ladders. Before you talk to your crew about ladder safety, read these tips:

- Make sure the straight ladder is the proper length. It should extend at least 36" above the area of access.
- It should be on firm, level footing.
- Adjust ladder to proper slope (4 to 1). For every 4 feet of vertical height, the base of the ladder should be 1 foot away from the structure it is leaning against.
- Ladders should not be painted (painting hides cracks, etc.).
- Clean dirty, oily, or greasy rungs before climbing.
- Inspect rungs and side rails for cracks, distortion, missing components, non-manufacturer installed screws, bolts, rivets, etc.. before climbing.
- Face the ladder when climbing.
- Maintain 3-points of contact while climbing or descending ladders. (Two hands and one foot or two feet and one hand).
- Use a hand line or well wheel for raising tools and material from lower levels to prevent carrying material up ladders.
- Tie the ladder off at the top and/or cleat (secure) at the base to prevent movement.
- While on a ladder keep your belt buckle between the rails (uprights) at all times (also called the belly button rule!).
- Landings should be provided if height exceeds 30ft.

Job-Made Ladders

- Single and double-cleat ladders should not exceed 24' in length.
- Single-cleat ladder width should be between 16" and 20". Double-cleat ladders should be 18" to 22" on each side.
- Cleats should be free of oil, grease, and mud.
- Filler blocks between the cleats must be as wide as the rails and the same thickness as the cleats. They must butt against the cleats on each end

Important!

- Metal ladders can conduct electrical current. To avoid potential electric shock clean, non-conductive ladders must be used for electrical work. Clean, non-conductive ladders should also be used when work is to be done within reach of an energized conductor, such as an overhead service drop.

How this talk applies to my crew:

Try These for Show and Tell

Review a job-made ladder and ask the crew to tell you what they are looking for in regard to proper construction.

Show workers the 3 ways to tell if an extension ladder is at an appropriate angle.

1. Measure from floor/ground to access point of ladder (or top of ladder if not used for access) and from base of ladder to structure ladder is leaning against. The height measure should be 4 times as long as the base measure.
2. If the ladder has an angle indicator decal on the uprights, show how it should be level with the ground and the wall/structure/etc... that the ladder rests against.
3. Show how a worker can stand at the base of the ladder with their feet (toes of shoes) resting on the base of the ladder uprights. The worker should extend their arms toward the ladder uprights and if their palms can touch the uprights the ladder is approximately set up at a 4 to 1 ratio.

Demonstrate 3-points of contact climbing/descending an extension ladder.

Questions You Can Use to Get Them Talking

- Could a stair tower be used instead of a straight ladder to ease access and improve material handling while ascending/descending?
- Is the ladder the right type and length for the job?
- Is the ladder in “as manufactured” physical condition? What does this mean to you?
- Are the feet of the ladder level and is it tied off?
- How do we plan to get material to the work level?

Attended By:

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