

# WORKING SAFELY WITH LADDERS

## Step And Straight Ladder Guidelines

Most of us use ladders from time to time—at our worksites, in the office, or at home. Yet few of us stop to review the basic rules for working safely with ladders. The following safety guidelines can help anyone who works with ladders prevent accidental falls, injuries, and disability.

### Step Ladders

When working on step ladders, remember never to climb past the second rung from the top. Make sure that the spreaders are functional and locked in place before climbing the ladder. If the ladder is positioned by a door or walkway, make sure that the door is locked or the walkway barricaded to prevent collisions. Do not overreach while working on a step-ladder—reposition the ladder to avoid leaning over the base of support.

### Straight Ladders

When working on straight ladders, use the four-to-one rule: position the ladder base one foot away from the wall for every four feet of ladder height (up to the support point). Never climb past the third rung from the top on a straight ladder. A straight ladder should extend at least 3 feet past its support point. Tie down your ladder as close to the support point as possible. Make sure that straight ladders have safety feet. To avoid overreaching, do not let the trunk of your body extend past the side of the ladder.

### General Guidelines

Persons who work on ladders should wear slip-resistant footwear, and make sure that ladder rungs are free of oil, grease, or other slippery substances. Before climbing any ladder, check its condition. Are nuts and bolts tightened? Are rungs secure? Do spreaders work? Are safety feet functional? If the ladder is in good condition, climb and descend it facing the ladder itself, and holding on with both hands. If you must carry tools, use a tool belt or a bucket attached to a hand line to pull tools up and down. When working on ladders, hold onto the ladder with one hand at all times. And remember, *never* use a metal ladder when working with electrical current.

### Prevent A Fall

By using these tips for ladder safety, you can help prevent accidental falls, injuries, and disability. All of us use ladders from time to time, so ladder safety should be everyone's concern.



If the ladder is positioned by a door or walkway, make sure that the door is locked or the walkway barricaded to prevent collisions.



A straight ladder should extend at least 3 feet past its support point. Tie down your ladder as close to the support point as possible.

## A SPECIAL NOTE...

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ARE LADDERS/WORKSTANDS PROVIDED FOR OUR NEEDS?

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF LADDERS AND WORKSTANDS IN YOUR WORKAREA?

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO CARRY A LADDER OR MOVE A WORKSTAND?

REMEMBER-

USE THE 4-1 LADDER RULE (SET THE BASE OF YOUR LADDER ONE FOOT AWAY FROM THE WALL FOR EVERY 4 FOOT OF LADDER HEIGHT)