

Every workday while using ladders, one American worker will die from a fall, five hundred will be injured and thirty-five will suffer a permanent disability. Implementing safe work practices during ladder use will help you prevent falls from ladders.

1. Common Reasons for Falls

- Overreaching
- Carrying tools or equipment while climbing
- Not maintaining 3 points of contact while climbing
- Using a stepladder as a straight ladder
- Failing to secure the ladder in place

2. Basic Ladder Safety

- Choose the right ladder for the job
- Inspect the ladder, starting with the feet
- Tag defective ladders and take them out of service
- Ensure pathways are clear of slip, trip and fall hazards
- Use proper lifting and carrying techniques
 - Get help if a ladder is heavy or bulky
- Ladder setup and use:
 - Position the ladder in the right spot
 - Use barricades if in a traffic area
 - Make sure support surfaces are free of slippery substances
 - Secure the ladder in place
 - Ensure boots or shoes are free of mud, grease, oil or other slippery substances
 - Know the maximum load rating and don't exceed it
 - Be aware of overhead, electrical hazards
 - Use a ladder with non-conductive rails if working near energized electrical sources
 - Wear a tool belt or hoist needed tools up to the work area

- When working, keep your belt buckle inside the rails to prevent overreaching
- Get down and move the ladder to prevent having to overreach

3. Safe Use of Stepladders

- Stepladders are self-supporting. Use them fully opened and locked in place
- Keep all four feet on a firm, stable surface
- Never climb or stand on the cross-braces
- Never stand above the second step from the top

4. Safe Use of Portable Straight Ladders

- Make sure the ladder is on a solid, slip-free surface, with feet level
- Use a four-to-one pitch to ensure the ladder is stable
- If accessing an upper level, extend the top at least three feet from the landing surface
- Never stand on the top three rungs
- Ensure that the base (foot) is pitched out from the vertical plane of its top support $\frac{1}{4}$ the length of the ladder, measured from the ground at the foot of the ladder to the top support.

