

Safe Ladders

According to a study done by the CDC published in 2014 - among workers, 20 percent of all fall injuries involve ladders and among construction workers, an estimated 81 percent of fall injuries treated in hospital emergency rooms involve a ladder. With falls being the most common injury in construction, this means that ladders believe it or not, are one of the biggest hazards we have on our construction sites. Most ladder deaths are from 10 feet or less.

Ensure the correct setup

- Pick the right ladder for the job. This includes obtaining a ladder that is the required size and configuration for the work you are doing.
- A-frame ladders should not be used in the leaned position, only in the open “A” position. In this situation, a fixed ladder or extension ladder would be more applicable.
- Always stay off of the top platform and top rung of an A-frame ladder. This means that you can only use 4 feet of a 6 foot ladder. As soon as you go past the top rung, you lose stability and can easily fall.
- Make sure that extension ladders are secured and reach 3 feet past the landing above.
- Make sure that the ladder is on a solid, even foundation.
- Some situations may require the use of alternatives such as scaffolding or a scissor lift.

Use the ladder safely

- Inspect the ladder for damage prior to use. Never use a ladder that looks questionable. Additionally, replace any worn or missing labels on ladders.
- Make sure not to exceed the weight limit for the ladder. Weight limits are listed on the label of the ladder.
- Never sit on the top of a ladder. Take a break if you begin to feel fatigued or need to rest.
- Keep your weight centered in the middle of the ladder. This may mean you have to step off the ladder, move it to another direction, rather than reaching from your current position.
- Always face a ladder while climbing up/down it.

