



City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training
Employees About:

Sept./Oct.
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Ladder Safety

Number 6

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Introduction and Overview

Ladders are pretty uncomplicated devices. Unfortunately, they cause more than their share of accidents. These accidents happen when people select the wrong ladder for the job, do not inspect it before use, or get careless about how it is used. The basics of ladder safety include a combination of knowledge, common sense, and a recognition that the simplicity of ladders does not translate into harmlessness. This edition of City Safe will cover the aspects of ladder safety, so that you can apply your own knowledge and common sense when using them.

General Hazards

People often fall off ladders resulting in injuries that can range from bruises to broken bones. Occasionally, the fall results in death. Ladders are involved in a considerable number of workplace falls and are usually the result of one or more of the following:

- 1) Poor Condition: If a ladder is missing parts or has parts that are not intact, it is not going to be able to support a person safely. Frequent inspections are a part of ladder safety.
- 2) Improper Selection: Not every ladder is right for every use. You should be aware of a ladder's weight and height limits. For obvious reasons, it is also critically important to never use a metal ladder near live electrical wires.
- 3) Improper Use: Ladders are designed to get you to a higher level. They are not platforms, scaffolds, skids, or braces. They should be used only for the sole purpose of their design. In addition, when you have to climb, use a ladder and not a chair, box, or other substitute. The way you use a ladder can either promote safety or cause accidents.

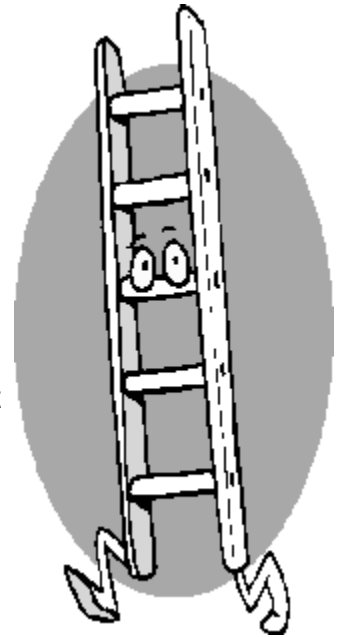
Identifying and Abating Hazards

Always inspect a ladder before you use it and include ladders in any general safety inspection. Whether the ladder

is wooden or metal, check to ensure that:

- 1) Steps and rungs are all in place, intact, free from grease or oil, have slip resistant surfaces, and are firmly attached;
- 2) Support braces, bolts, and screws are all in place and tight;
- 3) Metal parts are lubricated;
- 4) Rope is not worn or frayed;
- 5) Spreaders or other locking devices are in place;
- 6) Safety feet are in place;
- 7) Metal ladders are not dented or bent;

The first step in protection from safety hazards with ladders is to select the right ladder for the job. First, ladders are rated by how much weight they can safely hold. The weight limits include both you and any equipment you might be carrying.



LADDER RATINGS

- I-A 300 pounds (heavy duty)
- I 250 pounds (heavy duty)
- II 250 pounds (medium duty)
- III 200 pounds (light duty)

Check the ratings before you select a ladder. Make sure they are up to standard on height requirements. A stepladder should be no more than 20 feet high. A one-section ladder should be no more than 30 feet high, and finally, an extension ladder can go to 60 feet but the sections must overlap.

Ladder Setup and Safety Procedures

Although you have most likely used ladders numerous times, it must be stated that there are correct ways to set one up. Following these next few procedures, will go a long way toward preventing accidents:

- 1) Place the ladder on a flat, level surface. Use wide boards under it if you are on soft ground;
- 2) Set the feet so they are parallel with the surface the ladder rests against;
- 3) Extend the ladder so there is at least 3 feet above the top support;
- 4) Anchor the top and either tie or have someone hold the bottom;
- 5) Do not rest the ladder on a window or window sash or place it in front of a door unless it is locked or blocked;
- 6) Position the ladder so that the distance from the ladder base to the wall is one-fourth the length of the ladder;
- 7) Position, before extending, an extension ladder;

Once the ladder is set up properly, it is up to you to use it properly. As a starter, you should not use a ladder at all if you have a real fear of heights or a tendency toward dizziness or fainting. With that in mind, here are the guidelines for safe ladder use:

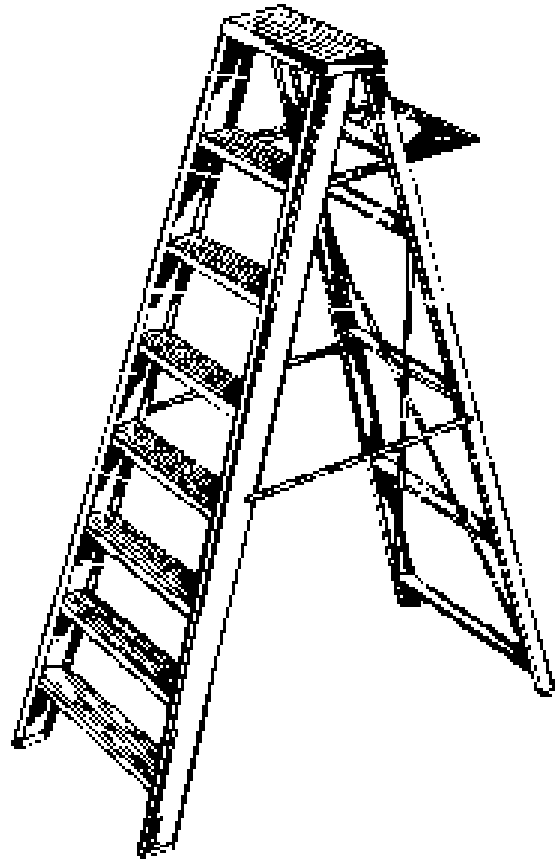
- 1) Only have one person on a ladder at a time;
- 2) Wear shoes with clean, non-skid soles - NOT leather;
- 3) Face the ladder while climbing up or down and hold the side rails with both hands;
- 4) Carry tools up or down on a belt or with a rope hoist, NOT in your hands;
- 5) Work with one hand on the ladder, keeping your tools in a hanger or holder;
- 6) Do not step on the top two stepladder steps or top four ladder rungs;
- 7) Keep your body centered on the ladder so your belt buckle is between the side rails;
- 8) Do not move a ladder while it is in use;
- 9) Keep your own movements on a ladder slow and cautious;

One final safety hint: It is best to have two people carry a ladder. If however, you have to carry one yourself, balance the center on your shoulder. Position it so the front end is above your head and the back end near the ground.

Climb In Safety

ALWAYS:

- Inspect the ladder before using it.
- Use the right type of ladder for the job.
- Make sure the footing is firm and level.
- Position the ladder so the distance from the wall to the foot of the ladder is about equal to 1/4 of the ladder's total length.
- Face the ladder when going up or down.
- Grasp the rails, not the rungs, when going up or down.
- Stay below the top three rungs.
- Move the ladder instead of overreaching.



NEVER:

- Use a defective ladder.
- Lean a ladder against glass or an object that might move.
- Carry tools or materials in your hand when going up or down.
- Use a ladder outdoors when it is very windy.
- Use a metal ladder near live wires or parts.
- Splice two ladders together.
- Allow more than one person at a time to use a ladder.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Do you have issues you want to see covered in City Safe?
If so, contact Bret Glendening by phone at (785) 354-9565
or by e-mail at bglendening@ink.org.



KMIT Golf Tournament
Saturday, October 12th
Hidden Lakes Golf Course, Wichita, KS

4-Person Scramble
8 AM "Shotgun" Start
Limited to 36 teams (144 total players)
\$60 per player (\$240 per team of 4)

For registration form, contact Wendy Flowers at wflowers@networkplus.net

KMIT Supervisor Training Seminars

October 2002
Four Sites
(see insert)

For registration form or information, contact Wendy Flowers at wflowers@networksplus.net

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